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Kobe fires 81 points, NBA's 2nd all-time high as Lakers beat Raptors

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DFA ordered to help OFW facing death for killing Kuwaiti master

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Walking 'Book of Knowledge' Ernie Baron passes away at 65

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, January 24, 2006 ■■ Vol. 21 / No.

RP to roll out red carpet in superhero welcome

PREPARATIONS TO GIVE MANNY PACQUIAO A superhero's welcome are under way and he will never have what fill him on his return probably on Friday.

"He's an authentic hero," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye. "We cannot honor him enough but our ability to give him the recognition that is appropriate."

A red carpet will be laid out when Pacquiao steps off the plane—among the process-

BIG TUESDAY, A14

'Hello Manny' sounds familiar; could help 'Hello Garci' probe

By Norman Bordadora

OPPOSITION CONGRESSmen were still scratching their heads a day after they heard President Macapagal-Arroyo's voice on speaker phone in her brief nationally televised call to

ARELLO, A4

DAY AFTER THE NIGHT BEFORE: Pacquiao fever shows no sign of waning; Filipinos can't stop talking about how their hero did it. Here, one of the 171 power blows that felled Morales, a national treasure in his native Mexico.

171 power blows made the difference

By Recah Trinidad

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—MANNY "Pacman" Pacquiao may have indeed undergone a swift transformation from a fighter into a well-rounded boxer, as evidenced by the balanced game he flashed in stopping Erik Morales.

But a review of the punches thrown and landed in The Battle at the Thomas & Mack Center on Saturday indicated that power, not improved skills, provided the big difference to the main event.

Pacquiao prevailed because he landed more power punches, some of them as life slips to the 6th rage that ultimately subsided and toppled Morales for the first time in his great career.

Pacquiao threw a total of 537 power blows, landing 171.

Morales threw 321 big punches and landed a total of 107.

The difference in percentage may not be too big, but in the case of Pacquiao, who packs power way, way above his natural weight, one big blow could end it all for his opponent.

"Pacquiao is a entry; he is a super featherweight who punches stronger than a regular welterweight," explained Gomez and Associates Board boxing division chief Nali Flores, who witnessed The Battle from ringside here.

In fact, Pacquiao was outscored by Morales on the percentage of jabs thrown and landed.

Pacquiao threw 256 jabs and connected only 29 times.

Morales threw 323 jabs and landed a total of 77.

That's a huge difference that could've changed the overall re-

IT'S POWER, A14

₱27B of seized Marcos funds gone, Senate told

SPLENDOR IN THE SLUM. Like the whole country, Cordilleras were glued to The Battle on Sunday. In Baguio City, residents without cable took to the streets in droves to watch a widescreen TV set up by ABS-CBN.

Budget dep't says only P5B remains for CARP

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE P27 BILLION FOR LAND REFORM DRAWN from the P35 billion in Swiss bank deposits of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, which the government got hold of in 2004, is now "practically gone," a budget official told the Senate yesterday.

Nora C. Oliveros, a director at the Department of Budget and Management, said only P5 billion remained of the confiscated Marcos wealth after P8 billion was set aside to compensate the human rights victims of martial law.

However, the remaining P5 billion will be used by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) this year.

"[It's] practically gone, your honor," Oliveros said during the Senate hearing on the DBM budget.

Senate President Franklin Drilon ordered DBM officials to explain why and how the Marcos funds were used, including P4.9 billion that was released right before the May 2004 elections.

He insisted that part of it went to the P726-million fertilizer fund that

PETA FROM MARCOS, A4

Daet lotto winner richer than Pacquiao

By Joanna P. Lee Bates
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and DJ Yap
in Manila

A POOR BICOLANO DID NOT HAVE TO travel miles to Las Vegas and trade punches with a tough Mexican to win more than P100 million—tax free.

In fact, Filipino boxing hero Manny Pacquiao's earnings of P105 million, minus taxes and other fees, may seem small compared to the winnings of this farmer from Camarines Norte who emerged as the lone jackpot winner of the Superlotto 6/49 on Sunday.

His total winnings: P150,478,095.20.

It was the biggest pot ever won by a single bettor since the beginning of the lotto draw in 1995, according to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

The unnamed ticket buyer from Daet bet on the winning combination

DAET, A6

COMING HOME

The best and worst of times

By Fernando del Mundo

(Second of three parts)

Editor's Note: The writer is a former foreign correspondent, ex-Philippine bureau chief of United Press International and former head of the Mass Information Unit in the office of the Geneva-based United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, traveling to the world's trouble spots. He left the Philippines in 1960 and returned last year, subsequently joining the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

WHAT SUPPORTS THIS OSTENSIBLY sybaritic Filipino lifestyle?

Sen. Manuel Villar says there exists in the country today a strong middle class representing "probably around 6 percent of the population."

"They're the ones you see in the shopping malls," says Villar, referring to families of the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) numbering in the millions.

They regularly send hard currency to their homeland—nearly $1 billion a month, not counting the amount sent through unofficial channels by Filipino TNBs (Tago ng

THE BEST, A4

New symptoms of military unrest emerging

By Amando Doronila

MILITARY UNREST HAS A NASTY HABIT OF popping up at a period when the constitutional government the Armed Forces of the Philippines has sworn to defend is in the midst of a grave political crisis and faces a number of challenges from its enemies while its public satisfaction rating is at rock bottom.

ANALYSIS

Last weekend, the government marked its fifth year in power as the capital was swept by rumors of coup plots.

The coup plots were the latest woes in hit the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo following the disputed May 2004 elec-

NEW SYMPTOMS, A14

AFP show of force to counter coup talk

WHO, ME RESIGNED? AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga laughs off the rumors at a press con in Camp Aguinaldo. But Army chief Lt. Gen. Esperon looks worried.

By Dona Pazzibugan
and Armand Mocarn

IN A RARE SHOW OF FORCE, THE country's four highest military officers yesterday appeared in public together to declare their support for the Commander in Chief, President Macapagal-Arroyo, in the face of coup rumors.

Seated alongside the heads of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga admitted "there is a threat" against the administration but later tried to wiggle around it by adding that he could not say if the threat was serious.

Ironically, it was Mr. Arroyo's own Justice Secretary, Raul Gonzalez, who helped feed the ru-

AFP SHOW, A14

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Only in RP: 'Desperate Japanese'

THEY COME TO THE PHILIPPINES HOPING TO start a new life, often with a new young wife.

But most of these middle-aged Japanese men end up without money, abandoned by their Filipino wives and with nowhere to go.

The number of these men, known as "Desperate Japanese" among the local Japanese community, has increased in recent years, an embassy official said.

"One would show up at least every two days," said a consular official with the Japanese Embassy in Manila.

Married men

He said most of them were married men who had fallen in love with Filipina bar hostesses in Japan and had followed the women to the Philippines, leaving their families behind.

"They would seek early retirement so they can come here (marrying the women). They would start living together, then buy a house, then a car," said the official who declined to be named.

The lower cost of living in the Philippines allows them to enjoy a good life initially, but unable to speak English or the local language, the men, mostly in their 50s, cannot find work and use up all of their money in a year or two, he said.

'Self-destruction'

With the money gone, their Filipino wives usually leave them, and shunned by their families in Japan, the men come knocking on the embassy's door for help.

"It's a case of self-destruction," said the official.

Some of the men also turn to the local Japanese community for help, said Masahiko Ishii, 67, a senior member of the Japanese Association in Manila.

"Many have even sold their passports and although they don't go begging in the streets, they don't have the money to carry on a living," he said, adding some followed him into a Manila restaurant asking for money.

Nearly 80,000 Filipina women go to Japan every year on entertainment visa, and most end up working as bar hostesses, although the number is expected to fall after Tokyo tightened visa rules last year.

The 67-year-old Ishii, who has lived in the Philippines for 45 years, said it is only recently that there troubled men have been drawn up in such numbers.

Cases rising

The consular official said the embassy had dealt with less than 10 "Desperate Japanese" until 2000, averaging their return to Japan, but the cases had risen in the last five years with the numbers rising to around 100.

Toru Ishimatsu, a Japanese Christian priest in Manila who has helped some of the men, said in addition to those who came after the Filipina women, there are some who come to the country hoping to make it big in business and end up penniless.

The Japanese community in the Philippines is the fifth largest in Asia with around 12,500 people, mostly expatriates working for major corporations, but the number could double if unregistered Japanese were included, the Japanese official said.

Midlife crisis

He said "Desperate Japanese" as a phenomenon was almost exclusive to the Philippines, adding that the "Philippine pubs," found even in rural Japan, provided comfort to the men having a midlife crisis.

"Too many men have been heartbreaked by a young Filipina in the local hostess bar and decided: 'What the heck, I'll go to the Philippines.'" Reuters

Top PNP prober posed as GRO to nail recruiter

CIDG top investigator PO2 Lucita Aparillo is also trained to handle cases of rape, child battery and abuse. (DAN MACEDA)

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE TOP INVESTIGATOR OF the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group is a woman.

PO2 Lucita Aparillo, who once went undercover to an applicant for a guest relations job to nail an illegal recruiter, has been named top investigator of the CIDG for 2005.

The citation is a major feat for Aparillo, and a big step for the police, considering that women make up 7 percent of the 110,000-strong organization. There are no women heads in the major departments in the Philippine National Police, nor are there women in the Command Group, the highest policy-making body of the police.

Aparillo, mother of two, was named top investigator among half a dozen or so CIDG investigators after a nationwide screening of candidates. A committee looked into her records, evaluated her performance, and grilled her in an interview, sources said.

The CIDG celebrated its 53rd founding anniversary yesterday and also awarded five other officers—Supt. Nelson Yabut, Chief Inspector Prudencio Ferrer Jr., SPO4 Nolex Bautista, PO2 Rogelio Cayanan and SPO1 Elpidio Agbayani.

Regular 1 and 11 slots went to four CIDG regional offices for 2005: the Pangasinan CIDG as best provincial unit; and the Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division as best operating division.

Aparillo's achievement proves that the CIDG—the primary investigative arm of the police—does not discriminate against women, according to Chief Supt. Nelen Tango, the unit's officer-in-charge.

Asked what he thought about Aparillo's achievement, Tango said: "But we do not have one category for women and another category for men in the service, promo dun sa mga deserving (promotion is based on merit)."

He added that he thought about Aparillo's achievements, Tango said: "But we do not have one category for women and another category for men in the service, promo dun sa mga deserving (promotion is based on merit)."

Tango's deputy, Senior Supt. Raul Castañeda, added: "To say that the police is a man's world is a thing of the past."

Dignified

Aparillo, 35, joined the police force after a short stint with a phone company more than 10 years ago. It was an unlikely choice, especially since her degree was in agricultural technology.

Being a police officer had always appealed to her, plus, the uniform looked dignified, she said.

Aparillo applied to the force, was accepted, and like most women officers, landed at the Women's Concern and Children's Desk (Majority of women officers are, in fact, confined to the WCCD and its battered women units—an indication that the police have not completely accepted the fact that women are just as capable as the men in holding key positions).

Undercover

Aparillo also took courses in law and planned to continue her studies while on assignment. She is currently assigned to the CIDG-WCCD office.

In 2003, Aparillo and two women officers went undercover to bust an illegal recruiter in Manila.

The CIDG and the Presidential Center for International Crime had learned of the agency's illegal activities and sought to entrap its owners, who had been sending women to Malaysia as guest relations officers.

At least one girl became pregnant and had been sent back to the Philippines according to Aparillo.

Busted

All the agency asked from the undercover lady officers—who were required to dance—were photos and P500 in cash. They were told they would be sent to Malaysia the very next day via the "back door."

"We caught her (the illegal recruiter) in the act and busted her. She was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment," Aparillo said.

Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon said the police put "a very high premium on addressing crimes against women and children" and had made moves to enhance the capacity of WCCD.

Calderon could begin by hiring more women in the force.

Opening up

Last year, a study funded by the United Nations Development Program found out that out of all the WCCD desks were manned by women, especially at night—which is often, defeats their purpose.

Trained to handle cases of rape, wife battery and other forms of abuse, Aparillo said the burden part of the job is getting a victim, especially a child, to talk about her ordeal.

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DFA ordered to save Pinay sentenced to die in Kuwait

By Volt Contreras

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS ordered the Department of Foreign Affairs to do everything they can to save a Filipina teacher on trial for drug trafficking in Kuwait.

"I've directed that [we] intervene in the case," Malacañang spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait was negotiating with the family of the victim to accept blood money in return for Ramirez's life, while a separate appeal before the court was being prepared by her two Kuwaiti defense lawyers hired by the embassy, the DFA said yesterday.

Ramirez, 33, a native of Dumaguete del Sur, was found guilty two days ago of trafficking her employer's daughter to death. The DFA did not provide details of the stabbing incident, but reports said she retaliated for the "family" her lived on "her people."

The court has yet to set a date of execution by hanging (not beheading, as earlier reported) in a local paper.

DFA spokesman Gilberto Asuncion explained that the victim's family must first be persuaded to "forgive" the doomed Filipina and sign a letter of forgiveness, before a specific amount of blood money is offered.

The money will then be sourced from private donors, not from government outlets, Asuncion said.

Given her detention, Ramirez has been stuck in her cell every month by embassy officials and appeared to have been "treated well" in prison, the department added.

Her own family members, however, particularly her father, Rosario, have been unable to see her after the Kuwaiti Embassy in Manila denied him a visa.

The DFA has asked the mission to reconsider his visa application on "humanitarian grounds."

Ramirez's predicament was made public only after her mother complained to the president that Filipino diplomats had failed to help her daughter.

Some seven million Filipinos work abroad, sending the equivalent of more than 10 percent of the country's economic output to their families back home. With AFP

GMA seeks help from PR folk

By Christine O. Avendaño

SAYING THAT PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO would continue to take a beating in the media "for as long as the atmosphere remains politically charged," her spokesperson appealed yesterday to public relations practitioners for help.

"I ask for your help, not because I speak for the President, but because it is time for us all as one to see our country, in our respective spheres of influence, for the country we love and we must build together," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye at the Philippine Public Relations Summit III held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati City.

Bunye said Ms. Arroyo, whose administration continues to be buffeted by allegations of electoral fraud, has "suffered tremendously in terms of media coverage and commentaries."

"If we are being in the atmosphere is remains politically charged, there will be rarely an respite from the many PR challenges that we face," said Bunye.

He told the PR practitioners he was there "to enlist your help."

The PR summit series is a creation of Romeo Ferraris, chair of Ferraris Public Relations and Control Communications International. Other members are Ely Ilag of Campaigns and Grey, Charlie Aguinaldo of Aguinaldo Associates and Tessa Jacinto of Ledda Jones PR.

Bunye lamented that the country continued to be bombarded by negative news, and those included the leveling of "serious allegations" that were "even without basis."

"Worse, even if these allegations were obviously the concoctions of persons motivated only by self-interest, our efforts (at quick) devise cultural 'unfortunately hope it up as the gospel truth," he said.

President Arroyo has denied the allegations she had asked a former election official to rig the election in favor of her then vice president Noli de Castro in the last May 2004 election. (Full, the late news see results Page 2)

Council of State meeting up today

By Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

TODAY'S COUNCIL OF STATE meeting would be the first opportunity for some senators and congressmen in six days together with various sectors to discuss the administration's [illegible] efforts on stamping out the political opposition who are saying many doomed the entire exercise as just "all for show."

Former President Fidel Ramos, Speaker Jose de Venecia and six senators are among those who have confirmed their attendance.

Except for Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, who has called for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo and is attending in the spirit of conservative debate, the other five senators are known to be friendly to the administration. These are Senators Juan Ponce Enrile, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Ralph Recto, Richard Gordon and Edgardo Angara.

Notably absent from the meeting would be former President Joseph Estrada, who is on trial for plunder charges, and former President Corazon Aquino, who has said she would not attend lest her presence be misconstrued as support for a President she believes is out to rule. Senate President Franklin Drilon is also expected to be away.

Malacañang said about 75 people would attend the meeting. Apart from members of the Cabinet and administration supporters in Congress, the delegates include representatives of labor, business, transport , women, youth organizations and other groups such as the National Movement for Free Elections.

Also attending would be former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos, Commission on Human Rights chair Purificacion Quisumbing, Commission on Elections commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Manuel Barcelona, Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo and Presidential Anti-Graft Commission chair Romulo Neri.

Also expected to attend are Liberal Party Vice-Chairman for the National People's Coalition, Wahid Musker of the Union League of the Philippines, Nesia Perdigon Appolo JP representing the youth, and Donald Dee and Sergio Lelis Ortiz for business.

A Palace source told Bandila leader Brother Mike Velarde and Iglesia ni Cristo leader Eraño Manalo had been invited, but as of press time yesterday, Velarde had yet to reply while Manalo sent word he could not attend.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita dismissed claims that the meeting would not amount to anything given that not all sectors were represented.

"It's not our objective to see everyone, but what is important is we have a meeting of minds regardless of political affiliations," he said in an interview over DMX radio. "And we hope that are not under the political bickering and turmoil, find out how we can help in resuming the country runs smoothly."

AFP 'Hello Garci' report out but top brass silent

By Dona Pazzibugan

THREE MONTHS AFTER ITS original deadline, a military fact-finding body finally submitted its report on the alleged wiretapping of top generals on the "Hello Garci" scandal last Friday.

But the head of the fact-finding board, Navy chief Vice Admiral Rufino Mayuga refused to disclose their recommendations to the press.

"All I can say is that we have finished and about 80% of officers. It is up to them to decide on the recommendations. Everything is sensitive until the Chief of Staff has decided," Mayuga told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday.

Mayuga said he had not read Mayuga's report, saying he was in Japan when the board submitted it to the turnover of command at the AFP General Command.

"Give us time," he said when asked when he would act on the board's recommendations.

Boat tracking generally were involved in the alleged conspiracy to rig the May 2004 presidential election for President Macapagal-Arroyo, namely army Chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, newly appointed Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Isidro Lobien, and retired Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani.

Iraq, RP most dangerous areas for journalists

HUBOT – A TOTAL OF 158 journalists were killed in 2005 – the worst year on record... with Iraq and the Philippines topping the list of the world's most dangerous countries, a media watchdog said Monday.

The journalists died in wars, assassinations, natural disasters and accidents in an unusually dangerous profession, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) said in its annual report.

A total of 36 journalists were killed in the Asia-Pacific region, with the Philippines again accounting for the most deaths, with 16 killed.

"The Philippines, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh remain the region's dangerous areas, but a worrying trend of violence has also emerged in Thailand," the IFJ said.

Of the total, 89 were killed "in the line of duty" – many singled out for assassination by political extremists, paramilitary forces or criminals, the report said.

The other 61 died when disaster struck while on assignment – 48 of them in a military plane crash in Iran.

Nine were being assassinated for the deaths of 51 journalists out of a total of 36 killed in the Middle East, making the region "by far the most deadly beat for reporters in the field," said IFJ general-secretary Aidan White.

"Most of those who died were local, many of them working for international media outlets in Iraq where the streets are too dangerous for foreigners to tread," White said.

US troops were involved in the death of five journalists, "bringing to 10 the number of independent media staff killed at the hands of occupation soldiers since 2003," the report said.

The IFJ has called for independent investigations into these deaths to eliminate suspicions that they were deliberately targeted.

"The majority of victims in the Asia-Pacific region were not killed in crossfire between warring groups, or by accident while they were reporting in conflict areas.

"Most of [them] were directly targeted and killed because they were journalists," the IFJ said. AFP

₱27B of seized Marcos funds gone, Senate told

From page A1

the Department of Agriculture released just before the election in apparent anticipation the campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"So, the Marcos wealth is all there. Hindi. The P35 billion is all spent because you used P26 billion this year (for CARP) and you have only P9 billion left...So, the P35 billion is all spent," Drilon said.

"Sir, Your Honor," Oliveros said.

Budget Secretary Romulo Neri said a total of ₱116.76 million (equivalent to P35 billion) was released over to the national government after the Supreme Court ruled in a November 2003 decision that Marcos funds should be in Philippine banks were ill-gotten. (See "**In the Know**," **Page A4.**)

Oliveros said P63.11 billion was allotted for CARP in 2004 and another P9.9 billion was released in 2005. Only a total amount of about P11 billion for this year.

But with P9 billion set aside for the human rights victims, the government is left with P1 billion, which falls short of the P26-billion CARP budget for that year.

"So, you see the P35 billion is only allocated, only P9 billion is left out of human rights compensation allotment. Is that correct?" Drilon said.

"I'll correct, Your Honor," Oliveros said.

Bills to compensate victims

The government, however, cannot compensate the human rights victims until Congress passes a law allocating the use of the proceeds from ill-gotten wealth cases for purposes other than land reform.

Under Republic Act No. 6657, or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) of 1998, all ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses and their cronies should be spent on land reform.

Bills seeking to indemnify the human rights victims have been stuck in the House of Representatives whose members include Marcos daughter Imee and his supporters.

The government has recovered a total of P66.3 billion in ill-gotten wealth from the Marcoses and their cronies since 1986, Bob Ingasa, information officer of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, said yesterday.

For locally funded projects

Drilon, however, the UNDP officials to explain the P6.91 billion released from the Marcos funds on April 15, 2004, saying that part of it might have been used for "hardware."

Neri said the P6.91 billion was released to the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Land Registration Authority, and the Land Bank of the Philippines, "among others."

A total of P544 million went to the DARs, federal-run programs and projects, P200 million was allotted to "locally funded projects."

"These locally funded projects are various projects implemented by the Department of Agrarian Reform, most of those are farm-to-market roads," Diokno said.

"Not fertilizer? Or does it include fertilizer?" Drilon asked.

"To my knowledge, Your Honor," Oliveros said, "it does not include fertilizer."

P2.6 billion for salaries

Drilon also questioned the propriety of the release of P2.6 billion for "operational support," adding that using Marcos funds to pay for government salaries might be improper.

"Is it in a proper disbursement? Marcos wealth, which is designated for CARP, used to pay for the salaries of the bureaucracy? Is that justified?" Drilon said.

Oliveros defended the allotment, saying that "operational support" included administrative expenses needed for operations.

"Those are personnel, Your Honor, that are working for CARP," she said.

But Drilon retorted: "My dear Rowena Oliveros, the whole DAR would be composed of personnel working for CARP. Don't try to make this thing complex."

Oliveros explained that there were "two classifications" for CARP personnel—those who received their salaries from the government's general fund and those who had their salaries ranges from the Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

10,000 personnel

"Your Honor, there were the personnel who were hired when the agrarian reform program was at its peak and there were around 10,000 personnel who were hired solely for the Agrarian Reform Program, and they are the ones whose salaries and wages are charged against (the Marcos funds)," she said.

Drilon said he would "double check" whether the DBM were authorized to spend the Marcos funds for "operation expenses."

"We wonder you personnel had this program in hand because your 10,000 personnel depended on it. The program is purported because the moment you stop... the program, you abolish [the] DAR," he said.

The best and worst of times

From page A1

Tago or Bogabo).

The smuggling group set the consumers on their economic and moral trends in what government propagandists call "benign neutrality."

DWIs account for the "boom" in the real estate sector, says Villar. They are buying lots and houses and introducing a new, "more sophisticated" culture in the country called "condo living."

Drive outside Manila and you'd easily spot brain-style dealers awaiting in splendor in the midst of desolate and impoverished villages.

In the slums, there are more cheap, affordable and environmentally friendly alternative ways of getting the wastes of Kilakbayan to Culiram.

There's a new line of the road—the ubiquitous tricycles distracting normal, even on highways and commercial roads, putting the safety of their passengers and motorists at risk.

Evidence of progress

As a sign on one tricycle put it, the unwelcomed contraption is a "living sign of progress," meaning the result of a Filipino knack in the Arabian Peninsula.

There's evidence of progress, even in the slums of Tondo. Television sets are swinging in the wind since makeshift houses are no longer in style, or what government propagandists call "benign neutrality."

A drive along Shell-Bel Boulevard reveals shanty towns similar to those you find in Sierra Leone and Liberia. These two countries have been ravaged by war and their economies is understandable.

Neighbors of Ecuador are jubilant in other slum areas in the metropolis—a lesser extent.

Complaints of rampant criminality in the Tondo area are rife, as it was before. One chipping occupation says a trader lately with chipping in the hustles and are stuck in traffic jams are constantly quite serious for unemployed youths. He says scale of the are ripped apart and could be help of terrorists on the land.

Ample food

I saw a non- (6,000,000) unemployed by a boy pedaling scrawny cycle in Tondo's Plaza Moriones. The man pinned up scrawls and tried to consult the boy's face with it. No easy had played with the man's a policeman name, at least there was one around. I call that progress.

Malnutrition obviously abounds. But there's ample food around, at least I can tell. What I've seen here doesn't compare with the situation in many places in Africa, where there's very little food, water, shelter or jobs to be found.

I stayed inside a tent in a remote Gaud along the border with Eritrea, where it was cold during the day and freezing at night. Shelter was the comfort and blanket. Lots more people there weren't so fortunate.

Those scenes of people sleeping on sidewalks, benches and cartoneral Santos Cruz channels were a recurrent every night in downtown Manila. Shelter and blanket than the homeless in Gaud, or the panhandlers in Washington DC in December. They don't seem to contend with wastes stall.

In the Balintawak, people in rural villages and towns are living lavishly recently. Many have relatives working in Western Europe, who regularly send home money to help them out.

At the height of the civil war in the Ivorian province of Bouake in the 1990s, I was told that Ivorians who were on a hill not outside the capital, Yamoussoukro, were called down by rebels as he recounted how a brother working in Germany had sent him money so he could buy and close food for the rainy.

The food had just been blown away by broken glass and his house was in flames. He urged that while he could rebuild the house, he would not be able to replenish the burned school food.

In the Eastern Europe, immigrant workers' economy is one vital lifeline to many families in the Philippines.

Downside

There's a downside to the OFW story.

A 44-year-old "factory forger" in an upscale supermarket lost his wife, who has been working as a midwife over the past six years in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, is splitting with him, his 9-year-old daughter now lives with his mother, at first she's believed.

A builder of an apartment is on the transport degree. At first wanted to become a merchant seaman but he found himself instead as the supermarket where he has been working for the last 22 years.

He doesn't seem to have a dead end. By early 2006 a day and go type of about P400 for helping customers stuff their groceries in plastic bags which he helps own to their cars.

"Life's not too bad. After my night hour shift, I go home and watch cable TV," he says.

Tawdry makeup

Just having a job and enough money at the end of the day is no inheritance enough for him, as it is, it seems. For everyone is a night job seeker.

As new politics glorifies spring up in the suburbs, the city of Manila is inexorably goes down the drain. Efforts to give it a facelift are making more than a tawdry makeup.

Driving along Roxas Boulevard, the spectacular sunset views on Manila Bay is gone. Marred not by displaced concrete that dot the much-hollowed footpath of Roxas Boulevard.

Though. The brightest area had all the makings of passionately similar to those in Cannes and Nice along the Mediterranean in the south of France.

At night, some parts of Manila are very pretty, like a backstage page in cosmic tall when all the lights are on, but most streets are dim, unkempt and rundown. Large parts of the city are decimated by and potholes. (**Streetscenes: a window to Filipino soul**)

Daet lotto winner richer than Pacquiao

From page A1

18-11-41-41-6-47, the PCSO said.

A man and his wife in Barangay Mambungan in Daet reportedly won the jackpot prize, according to a businessman in the capital town.

The businessman quoted a police officer from Daet—who was assigned to resolve fraud transactions saying that the husband, about 50 years old, was hysterical and was screaming as he neared the winning ticket.

Just keep quiet

The wife, about 25 years old, however, immediately calmed him down and told him to keep quiet.

Later, the husband denied that he was the lucky jackpot prize.

The couple bought the winning ticket at Bettor Intercambio Corporation, one of the two PCSO lotto outlet in Camarines Norte. It is located in the town's public market.

The outlet is owned by Sonia Lerma, the governor of Isabela province. **Its station clerk, who will be rewarded** to up to about P500,000, depending on the computation of the PCSO main office, according to Ernesto Abando, PCSO Davao assistant.

Abando said the lucky ticket was also sold in Daet. He said that only learned that there was a winner from Daet.

It was the first time that someone in Daet won the jackpot, according to the PCSO executive.

Lotto fever commenced in Camarines Norte province in the PCSO national office still did not know who the winner was.

Where bet was placed

"So far, no one has come forward to claim the prize of P [illegible] million," said Sonia Alcala of the PCSO central main division.

The PCSO could only identify where the bet was placed—Barrister Lotto Inn outlet at Jesus Building on J. Luklan Street, a mall number at the PCSO central operation center office.

"The winner has certainly gotten in touch with the PCSO provincial director in Daet, but we don't know when (the winner) will claim the stock," said the mall executive, who asked not to be named.

From information about the winner's gender was not available. "We are really don't go out of our way to ask for details about them to protect their identity," the mall member said.

"They simply have to present their winning ticket for verification. Then they will be given the check. It's up to them whether to deposit the money in the bank or withdraw everything," Alcala said.

The PCSO chair advised the still unidentified winner to keep the money in a bank.

"He or she could immediately put it in a bank while he or she is thinking about what to do with the money," PCSO chair Sonato Ulatowski said. "That way, it is already earning interest because it is not in a checking form to use it."

The Daet jackpot is the biggest lotto pot has a whole year to claim his or her prize, she said.

The second biggest pot was the P247 million in the Megalotto draw of March 31, 1999, while the biggest pot was the P147-million in the Super Lotto draw of July 25, 2001, according to the PCSO.

The biggest jackpot ever was the P202-million three years ago, but it was won by six people who shared the prize.

In September 6, '46, one ticket ran matched from 1-to-49 on a ticket worth P15. Four wins at the other matches till six, or one three, four, or five numbers of the winning six-number combination.

Super-queue at lotto stalls

The win clarified the hopes of millions of Filipinos, young and old, who queued at lotto outlets around the country on Sunday, clutching what they hoped to be their ticket to fortune.

Backyards selling stickouts, numbers with numbers, and even banks with the quadrillion lined up for hours as the money would mean life! Birth folks in Quezon City to pay for their tickets.

Problem in sorting millions, bespectacled businessmen, teenagers in street clothes, and couples holding hands in their arms.

A ticket seller said the queue most likely reached 10,000, as of 7:30 p.m., at which time the crowd had not yet thinned. The lines closed at 8 p.m., in time for the 9 p.m. draw.

Many people brought only a handful of tickets, but some spent as much as P10,000 just to increase their chances of winning, said Thierry Ian Gilbero of Lucky Circle Corp.

The lines finally broke up for the past three weeks, but Sunday's record jackpot was the real, said. **With a report from Judge A. del Puerto**

Corrections

IN THE AM 22 ISSUE, A front-page story—"Palace mum on reports of surveillance"—wrongly attributed to Sen. Mar Roxas the following quote: "The statement was attributed to. The use of leave by senate personnel that there is a need to [illegible] to ensure no surveillance in our homes. Diminishing trust cannot ensure surveillance in our homes. Diminishing trust cannot ensure surveillance in our homes. Telephones, the use of such leave. While running public support, it may facilitate it is difficult when it may be unable to ensure that it will exist, some reports in its safe spot." The statement was made by Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Inq7 Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 757 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, fax (632) 897-2638 or e-mail newsdesk@inq7.net. Letters should be signed.

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Hello Manny . . .

From page A1

congratulate Manny Pacquiao on his victory on Saturday against Erik Morales.

The way Mr. Arroyo said "Hello Manny," it sounded suspiciously similar to the female voice that famously called out "Hello Garci," the lawmakers said.

"There seemed a similarity in the voice used in the tone," said House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

Mr. Arroyo has apologized for making with an election official but has yet to acknowledge that her was the voice caught on wiretapped conversations with Virgilio Garcillano that nearly wrecked her last year.

Opposition politicians say the wiretap was evidence she cheated in the May 2004 presidential election—a charge Mr. Arroyo has denied.

Unwarmly familiar voice

"It sounded unwarmly like that of the "Hello Garci" tapes. It could help in the authentication of the voices," Reinaldo said in a text message to the lawmakers.

Reinaldo said it might be a good idea to compare "Hello Manny" with "Hello Garci."

The House majority says the alleged wiretaps violate legislation.

Asked about the opposition comparison, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said:

"It is very pathetic to reduce politics every time things like that happen when everybody should be rejoicing because a Filipino has achieved something very spectacular and everybody should make everyone of respond."

Cynicism

"But is the problem with our people," he said, "We cynicism and at the same time the positive."

The President merely talked to congratulate him and the

From page A1

same for that," said Gonzalez, usually by how he is in this that the President and her husband were riding on the Pacquiao victory.

The appearance of Imee Gonzalez-Araneta Miguel Arroyo at congress and the President's subsequent call to Pacquiao after Ronald Morales ducked para from people watching the fight on television and movie theaters in Metro Manila.

Gonzalez said the Pacquiao case different. They were initially behind the boxer flyik Morales.

"Why should we not do it? Why should we not relate to? I'm sure that [and the President] said nothing about it, the actual have been criticized at as," he said.

Director General Arturo Lomibao, chief of the Philippine National Police, said Pacquiao's win deserved a "reception" on the political front.

"It's the least we can do," he said.

But Sen. Rodolfo Biazon endorsed the boxer against allowing himself to be used by politicians to launch propaganda.

"He should not wear anything and should not allow himself to be used by politicians," he said.

The House opposition also lauded Imee Pacquiao's appeal for unity.

No to President

Escudero said that while it was wrong Filipinos unite for unity and reconciliation to reign in the country, the opposition was not inclined to rally behind a government based with serious questions of legitimacy.

"If is the wish of every Filipino for the country to be united, but it would not be right to be united behind something that is wrong," Escudero said.

With reports from Pia Hontiveros-Baraquiel and Paterno Esmaquel II

P13.1 BILLION

Bill giving gov't men pay raises certified as urgent

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT ARROYO has certified as urgent a special appropriations bill allocating P13.1 billion for salary hikes she has promised to give the country's one million national government workers this year, House Speaker Jose de Venecia said yesterday.

"The bill was deemed urgent so [government employees] can receive immediately their salary increase even before the General Appropriations Act is passed," De Venecia said at a noon conference.

Nonetheless, De Venecia tried to assure the public that the country will not be forced to operate on a re-enacted 2005 budget in light of Congress' failure thus far to pass the proposed P1.0301 trillion national budget for 2006.

"Rest assured, the [budget] will be approved in the next few weeks," he said, brushing aside fears that the budget will not be approved in time.

The special appropriations bill was filed last week by Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr., following Ms Arroyo's announcement that she would ask Congress to pass a special law providing for the salary increases.

"National government employees have been stalled the failure of the national government to provide salary increase for the past five years," Andaya said in an explanatory note to House Bill No. 5835.

"They are eagerly looking forward to the proposed compensation adjustment for 2006 and would be extremely disappointed if the passage of the [budget] is much delayed," he also added.

Andaya did not say when he expected the bill to become law, but Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., Liberal Party rally at Plaza Miranda last Thursday that she would push Congress hard so that the increases could be given by Administration Day.

Fil-Am pilot to be buried in Bulacan; gov't sends its condolences to family

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY SENT ITS condolences to the family of the Filipino-American pilot of a US Apache helicopter gunship that was shot down in Iraq last week.

The remains of Chief Warrant Officer Raul Gaviria will be flown home to Bulacan for burial at an [illegible] in February, the Department of Foreign Affairs said, quoting the soldier's family.

Gaviria, 34, along with a co-pilot died in a crash when a surface-to-air missile struck their AH-64 Apache last Jan. 16 in Taji, Iraq. He was on his second tour of duty in Iraq under Task Force Iron[illegible] of the US Army's 4th Infantry Division.

"May the beautiful memories of your son give you strength at this difficult time. And may it help to know how many people share your sorrow and stand with you in your time of need," DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo said in a statement addressed to Gaviria's loved ones here and in the US.

No date has yet been set for the shipment of Raul's remains from Texas, where his Army unit as well as his Filipino-wife Apple is based, the DFA added.

Raul will be at the Nido Memorial Park in Meycauayan, Bulacan, told the Inquirer yesterday. Volt Contreras

Mangalindan, 85

DRA. [illegible] VDA. DE MANgalindan of San Narciso, Zambales, and Quezon City, passed away in Los Angeles, California, last Sunday, Jan. 22, She was 85.

Dra. Mangalindan, a World War II veteran, is the widow of Dr. Enrique Mangalindan.

She is survived by her children and children-in-law Dra. Alice and Dr. Vicli Lim, Mario and Eva, Asheva and Luci, Tess and Dan Martinez, Lee and Bey Padua, Jojo and Debbie, Cutie, Rowland Wee, Dra. Annabel Ken Dalisay, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Arrangements are being made to bring back her remains to the Philippines. Funeral details will be announced later.

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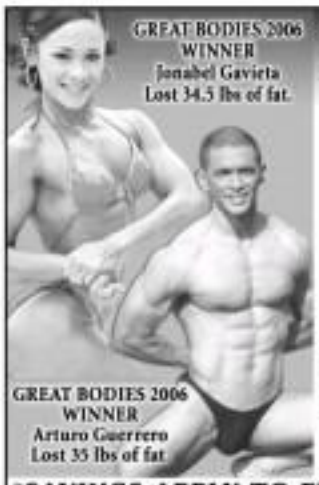

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The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Gonzalez

US high alert urged after Osama threat

WASHINGTON—US LAWMAKERS ON SUNDAY urged the US administration to raise the domestic terror alert level, following new threats by al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.

"We just written to Michael Chertoff, the head of the Department of Homeland Security, urging that he focus on whether we need to raise our threat level," Rep. Jane Harman, top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, told ABC television.

The US intelligence community Harman said, has assessed the threat is bin Laden's new message and "taken it seriously."

The United States last week rejected a truce offer from al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden, and despite a threat of more attacks, authorities said there will not raise the national alert level.

In an audiotape broadcast by the Al-Jazeera Arabic television network, bin Laden warned that attacks on the "homeland" of the United States were being prepared. Al-Qaida waged the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington which led to the United States declaring its "war on terror."

The Department of Homeland Security said there was no plan to raise the US alert level, which now stands at "yellow," to "elevated," the second-to-last color-coded.

But Harman said "The tape that was released a few days ago, to my mind, is quite scary.

"Certainly people in Los Angeles, where I come from, are doing more vigilant around LAX [Los Angeles International Airport], which is a top terrorist target," said Harman.

Sen. John Kerry said that the administration has acted in "implied" public fears over terrorists and repeated allegations that the United States should have caught bin Laden on the Afghan-Pakistan border in late 2001 when he was believed surrounded in mountains.

"We know, Osama bin Laden is going to die of kidney failure before he's killed by Karl Rove and his crowd," Kerry told ABC, referring to top presidential adviser Rove.

"All he does is divide America over the issue and exploit it."

Peter Hoekstra, the Republican head of the House Intelligence Committee said the terror alert level should only be raised in the event of supporting evidence.

"I think we should consider raising the threat level, but we shouldn't do it just because we've gotten a tape from Osama bin Laden," he said.

Rep. Peter Hoekstra added: "When Osama bin Laden says he's going to attack the United States and he's focused on attacking us in the homeland, we should take him very, very seriously."

"During the 1990s, he made these same kind of threats and he actually attacked the United States and we ignored it."

Vice President Dick Cheney said after the bin Ladin tape surfaced, that al-Qaida's failure to mount a new attack showed that Washington's strategy is working.

"The fact of the matter is, we have not been attacked in more than four years. That is not an accident. It's not just hard luck," Cheney said.

Rove refused that. AFP

China economy likely to become one of top five after strong 2005

SHANGHAI—CHINA'S ECONOMY likely became one of the world's five biggest in 2005 as booming exports and surging investment again helped secure growth of well above nine percent, analysts said Monday.

Ahead of Wednesday's release of China's 2005 economic data, estimates report the world's fastest growing major economy to surge between 9.1 and 10.3 percent to surpass the $2-trillion mark.

"It will definitely go past France, so for sure China is going to be the number-five economy in the world," Chen Xiaolong, an economist at BNP Paribas in Beijing, said.

France's economy posted gross domestic product (GDP) of $2.04 trillion in 2004, according to World Bank figures, and economists estimate its economy was unlikely to have grown by more than two percent last year.

Chen's claim of growth—around five times faster than Europe's—the Asian juggernaut could easy surpass powerhouses Britain, the world's fourth largest economy.

"It would depend on the (US) GDP [next year]. Number one the nominal GDP growth and number two the exchange rate of the British pound against the US dollar," said Chen.

Only last month the Chinese economy had officially been worth $1.6 trillion, a still formidable sum that placed China seventh on the list of world's largest economies.

But Beijing's announcement on Dec. 19 that the country had been enormously underrated by 284 billion suddenly lifted China past Italy into the sixth spot.

Following the revaluation, the government said China's economy had expanded at an average rate of 9.4 percent between 1995 and 2004, up from 9.4 percent reported previously with growth of 10.1 percent in 2004.

For years international economists insisted that the Chinese economy was undervalued because millions of service-orientated businesses had been overlooked.

The adjustment left the National Development and Reform Commission, the nation's top economic planning body to overhaul its 2005 GDP growth forecast from 9.4 percent to 9.8 percent.

The tax bureau also raised its estimate to 9.8 percent.

Economists were pleased with the revaluation because it meant the economy was in better shape than previously thought.

"The details of the revisions also suggest that growth is on a more sustainable footing," Lehman Brothers economist Sohee Kim-Sohee said in a note to clients.

The turbulence had led to fears both at home and abroad that the massive amount of fixed-asset investment, which at times neared a seven-smoking high of 30 percent of GDP, could lead to an inflationary crisis.

But now that the economy is worth $2.64 trillion more, fixed-asset investment levels, a major barometer of how much the government is spending on major infrastructure projects, have improved.

"It is likely that the investment-to-GDP ratio for 2006 will be revised down closer to 40 percent," said Subramanian, who expects annual GDP growth of 9.8 percent with inflation to remain under control.

Even China's consumption-to-GDP ratio, long a source of concern for a government looking to shift more of the economic burden to the consumer, has improved.

"The revised GDP data shows a less imbalanced economy. Even investment and heavy industry production in China's economy are far more than previously thought," said Subramanian. AFP

MODELS dressed as goddesses of wealth and holding dogs pose for photos as part of a celebration for the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Dog at a shopping mall in Hong Kong, Jan. 22. The Chinese Lunar New Year, Year of the Dog celebration falls on Jan. 18 to 31. —

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Diet grills Koizumi for backing entrepreneur in Livedoor scandal

TOKYO—THE INVESTIGATION INTO INTERnet startup Livedoor Co. opened in the political sphere Monday, with politicians grilling the prime minister over his support for the brash, young entrepreneur at the center of the scandal.

Allies about the probe into Livedoor, as investors permit suspected of violating securities laws, and 34 33-year-old chief executive, Takafumi Horie, were in Tokyo court's conduct demeanor Monday after it tumbled last week.

The whole affair is proving to be a major embarrassment for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi because of his party's backing for Horie in last September's elections.

During the campaign, top party officials mingled for Horie, a celebrity for his bold takeovers and defiant criticism of the stodgy old guard in corporate Japan. Horie and what he symbolized seemed in fit well with Koizumi's appeal for broader economic reform and fostering entrepreneurship.

Horie ended up losing his particular race in what seemed one to be a landslide victory for Koizumi.

But with Horie now raised in a scandal, opposition politicians have been quick to seize the opportunity to attack the prime minister.

Seiji Maehara, leader of top opposition Democratic Party, accused the ruling party of exploiting Horie's closer and seen has more interest in protecting its ties to the public.

"The Liberal Democratic victory is more window-dressing than explained such media," Maehara told legislators. "The prime ministers and the ruling party cannot avoid critical questions. The prime minister must apologize to the people."

Koizumi merely replied that the government was still monitoring the case because it was still under investigation.

News of the probe broke last Monday, when prosecutors raided Livedoor's offices and Horie's home on suspicion that company spread false information related to its takeovers. Media reports have also said the company is accused of hiding losses.

Speculation has been rife on when Horie will be questioned by investigators after his associates concerning takeovers, especially were questioned in recent days. Major daily Asahi Shimbun reported Monday that Horie may be questioned as early as this week. The Tokyo prosecutors' office declined to confirm the report.

Horie has repeatedly denied wrongdoing. His comments indicate that Livedoor employees didn't think they were doing anything illegal in their takeover using stock split and buyouts that helped Livedoor and its affiliates' shares surge, making Horie an overnight millionaire and TV star. AP

KOIZUMI speaks at Parliament in Tokyo Jan. 11. Koizumi was grilled by the opposition for supporting an entrepreneur at the center of a criminal investigation by Tokyo prosecutors on division stock trading. —

Bush photographed with disgraced lobbyist—Time

WASHINGTON—AT LEAST FIVE photos show US President George W. Bush with the lobbyist at the center of a corruption scandal, Time magazine reported on Sunday.

The White House has tried to play down any contact with Jack Abramoff, who pleaded guilty to fraud charges this month and agreed to help prosecutors in wide-ranging corruption investigations.

Time did not publish the photographs, saying its sources refused to provide them for publication. Most look like those taken at a great

ABRAMOFF

dressed occasions, it said.

The White House has said Bush does not know Abramoff and does not recall ever meeting him, and that the lobbyist attended two Texas rubber receptions and a few staff-level meetings at the White House.

"Mr Abramoff attended being involved in outrageous wrongdoing," White House spokesperson Trent Duffy said on Saturday.

"The president does not recall meeting him. We have previously believed, however, it would not be surprising if the president met him at some of the widely attended events we know they both attended," she said. "The president has taken over upon thousands of pictures in such events."

Time said its one photograph Bush appears with Abramoff and Neil Bortz, then chair of the Kickapoo Indians, which owned a casino in Texas and were represented by the lobbyist. It also included several other unidentified people.

Time quotes White House spokesperson Bush Bortz as saying that available records show Abramoff was not at the event attended by Gates. Reuters

US solons seek review of eavesdropping rules

WASHINGTON—US SENATORS should be reviewed and possibly rewritten to allow the type of eavesdropping that US President George W. Bush has been criticized for authorizing, lawmakers from both parties said on Sunday.

Democrats and some Republicans have said the Bush administration's classified warrantless eavesdropping program is illegal. The White House has strongly defended the National Security Agency surveillance as legal and essential. The Senate Judiciary Committee starts hearings on the issue on Feb. 6.

The NSA has been monitoring communications, including e-mail and telephone calls, into and out of the United States by people believed linked to al-Qaida or related groups.

An audio tape by Osama bin Laden that emerged last week threatening new attacks on the United States has heightened security concerns. Neither party has offered to let arms go falling to prevent the country, particularly as corruption scandals and public questioning of the Iraq war loom over November's congressional elections.

Lawmakers on several Sunday talk shows said that if the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (Fisa) does not give Bush the tools and legal framework he needs to monitor potential threats, the president should ask Congress to change the law to make it easier.

Massachusetts Democrat John Kerry, who endorsed former Vice President Al Gore's call for an independent investigation of the Bush program, said on ABC's "This Week" that some Republicans like Bush adviser Karl Rove are trying to expand Democratic opposition to warrantless spying as wiretapping.

"What he's (Rove) trying to present is somehow Democrats don't want to eavesdrop appropriately to protect the country," Kerry said.

That's a lie," Kerry said. "We're prepared to eavesdrop wherever and whenever necessary in order to make America safer."

But Kerry said the spying has to be legal and constitutional and if Bush needs the law to be changed, "then come to us and tell us. ... There is room to protect the Constitution and not get off on your own and violate it."

Other prominent Democrats senators including Dick Durbin of Illinois, Charles Schumer of New York and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut made similar statements about reexamining the breadth and desirability of the warrantless surveillance a few days after Bush urged Republicans to campaign on terrorism and security issues in the midterm elections.

"Certainly Democrats continue to engage in misleading and outlandish charges about this vital tool that helps us do exactly what the 9/11 Commission said we needed to do—connect the dots," White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said in a statement.

"It defies common sense for Democratic leaders during this administration's setting outside to authority while their own party leaders have been briefed more than a dozen times—only after there was a leak and subsequent media stories ago did they start criticizing the program," he said. Reuters

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Bolivia's Morales vows justice for Indian majority

NEW Bolivian President Evo Morales (right) and his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chavez wave from the Quemado Presidential Palace balcony in La Paz, Jan. 22. Radical leftwinger and coca leader Evo Morales was sworn in as the first indigenous leader of Bolivia and vowed to end what he called the humiliation of the native population. AP

LA PAZ—EVO MORALES PAID respects to Sunday as Bolivia's new president, vowing to end what he described as five centuries of humiliation and abuse of the country's Indian majority.

Wearing a dark suit and no tie, the former coca-leaf farmer became president once and for all, Jan. 22, 2005, with almost 54 percent of the vote.

In a second speech Sunday to supporters crammed into a city plaza, Morales promised "a profound change in Bolivian politics."

"The blood spilled by our brothers has not been in vain," he said of those who had died in mass street protests over the past years.

"We are not vengeful. We are not going to take revenge on anyone," he told the mass of people crowding the square and the main avenue leading to it, who were wearing the Bolivian national flag and the multi-colored flag representing the country's 37 indigenous groups.

"We are going to show those who massacred us and murdered us how to govern."

Morales was repeatedly referring to the so-called "gas wars," a series of bloody mass protests against the policies of then President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada in the months before he was forced to resign in 2003. AFP

Protests greet Roe vs Wade anniversary

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA—THOUsands of abortion opponents massed outside Minnesota's Capitol in one of several protests across the United States on the 33rd anniversary of US Supreme Court decisions legalizing abortion, amid heightened hopes and fears over what a new bench on the Supreme Court will mean for abortion rights.

A crowd of sign-wavers died to protest, among other issues and civil rights, against a voting week Sunday to call for a ban on public funding of abortion.

"We must stop abortion in our state," said Sheila Weinbach, head of Minnesotans Citizens Concerned for Life. "Things are changing in this country."

Many abortion opponents said they were heartened by President George W. Bush's choice of Samuel Alito to replace Sandra Day O'Connor, a moderate who was often the court's swing vote.

Alito, who appears to have solid support from the Senate's Republican majority, refused during his confirmation hearings to agree with assertions by Democrats that Roe v. Wade was "settled law," upsetting supporters of abortion rights and heartening opponents.

At Roe 33 protests, thousands of abortion opponents shouldering signs with slogans such as "Stand forgive in the Month" marched Saturday, while abortion rights supporters along the march route waved abortion "keepers" and shouted "Rights go home."

"Abortion rights have been slowly whittled away while we haven't even been looking," said Mary Hanten, 22, who demonstrated for both sides of the issue to support rights for the second protest. "But's what's so shocking and so scary to me."

In Idaho, nearly 400 abortion protesters marched at the Statehouse Saturday, including Boise Archbishop and Sen. Michael Otter, Republican, Mike Zeibley, who carried sign with her ultrasound photo and the words, "This is me at 16 weeks." AP

Japan tells US 'ball in its court' on beef

TOKYO—JAPAN TOLD A TOP US envoy Monday that the burden was on Washington to ensure its beef was safe and ordered fresh checks on imports after Tokyo imposed a new ban over mad cow disease concerns.

Hiroshi Oe, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, told US Ambassador Thomas Schieffer that Washington must "take responsibility" for ensuring its beef was safe, a ministry official said.

Oe told Schieffer that Japan's decision to ban US beef imports was "based on scientific evidence" and

Russia, Georgia in energy row

MOSCOW, GEORGIA—AZERBAIJAN HAS started supplying Russian natural gas to Georgia, the Georgian gas company said Monday, helping compensate for a cutoff of gas caused by explosions at southern Russian pipelines that brought a new energy crisis to the Caucasus Mountains nations and set off a furious diplomatic row.

Georgian leaders kept up a barrage of accusations that the Moscow—which also cuts supplies to Ukraine—were deliberate and part of a Russian policy to punish Tbilisi for its attempts to distance itself from Moscow.

Parliamentary Speaker Nino Burdzhanadze said Gibor Mosbey radio late Sunday that "we have long been warned, including by some Russian politicians, that if we continue the Independent policy we are pursuing, if we insist on the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers and so on, then Georgia will remain without electricity or gas, which has indeed occurred."

Russia has strongly denied responsibility for Sunday's gas pipeline explosions in the Stavki District region bordering Georgia as well as a blast at an electricity-transmission tower in another region, Karachayevo-Cherkessia, that had supplied Georgia. Russian prosecutors launched investigations into the pipeline blasts and Russian news reports said explosive residue was found near the blast sites.

Azerbaijan began pumping Russian gas to Georgia around 10 p.m. Sunday, said Natela Bendeliani, a spokesperson for the Georgian International Gas Corp. Azerbaijan was to provide 2 million cubic meters a day—close to half of the 7 million cubic meters Georgia usually receives from Russia. Bendeliani said about half of Tbilisi's 1.1 million residents would be supplied normally while other consumers in the capital would have to wait two to three days.

Bendeliani also suggested Armenia—outside Tbilisi would have to send more kerosene and Prosecutor Mikheil Saakashvili said there would be one to two-hour blackouts in some districts for the next several days. Income regions, nighttime temperatures have reached minus 20 Celsius.

Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Noghaideli said Georgia had starting importing electricity from Turkey, and Energy Minister Nika Gvaramia was in Iran on Monday hoping to negotiate gas supplies there.

The pipeline shutdowns hit Georgia, which has faced economic energy shortages for more than a decade, with at least a dozen of hundred cities and soup. Municipal housing stations in Georgia were out of service in the mid-1990s amid the country's post-Soviet economic collapse and many households rely on gas space heaters to stay warm.

The gas shutdowns underlined Georgia's and Armenia's dependence on Russian energy supplies. Georgian officials often brush at the dependence and when they say are Russian attempts to use it to interfere in the politics of its ex-Soviet neighbor, which now is pursuing pro-Western policies.

"We categorically demand from the Russian leadership the resumption of energy supplies to Georgia as a matter of urgency and that Russia fulfill its obligations as provided for under contracts as is provided by trader civilized, international trade relations," Saakashvili told reporters in Tbilisi. AP

100 YEARS GUARDING THE POPE
Honor guards decked out in their medieval military costumes of blue, red and yellow, receive the Pope Benedict XVI's blessing in Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City Jan. 22, during the ceremonies celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the Swiss Guard. AP

Eastern Europe's bitter cold claims 17 more lives

MOSCOW—MUCH OF NORTHERN AND eastern Europe remained in the grip of bitter by cold weather Sunday as an Arctic freeze claimed victims from Lithuania to Turkey.

At least 17 weather-related deaths were reported over the weekend.

Moscow's bitter chill from Siberian temperatures jumped to at least 79 after three more people froze to death overnight Saturday. Another 20 were hospitalized with hypothermia, the Interfax news agency said.

Temperatures in the Russian capital eased slightly to about minus 14 Celsius, after reaching as low as minus 22 C overnight.

In Russia, where temperatures fell to minus 26 C in the southeastern part of the Baltic nation, several lives were caused by overheating, killing two people Saturday.

Fire engines from the Soviet era had to be taken out of mothballs as they were more effective in warming the icy temperatures.

Two more people died from cold in Lithuania over the weekend, bringing the total to eight and about 100 this were caused by heavy storms.

Three elderly people also died in Ukraine, raising the total to 21 deaths since temperatures dropped at the start of last week.

Five deaths from hypothermia were reported in neighboring Poland, where rail and road traffic was seriously disrupted Saturday, bringing the total of people to have died from the cold since October to 127.

In Turkey, a man died of exposure after walking in snow-covered mountains to the north of the country, the Anatolian news agency said.

And in Greece, a man carrying a man died in a pile up caused by black ice.

Across the northern outskirts of Europe, from Russia across the Baltics to the Scandinavian states, authorities sought to keep energy supplies running, road and rail traffic circulating and health authorities alerted in the midst of the extreme conditions.

In the Moscow region, authorities resolved a number of cases of failed heat supplies to homes and traffic problems caused by heavy snowfall, news reports said, while regions struggled to keep aging heating systems operational.

Forecasters there said temperatures would fall on Monday to minus 24 C but would moderate to the week to minus 11 C on Thursday.

In Turkey, heavy snowfall swept across the country and sent six homeless, isolating more than 3,000 villages and cutting off electricity supplies to hundreds of others.

Rescuers took more than 13 hours to rescue, pure a sick woman in the snows trapped 50 her away. AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Like Enema G. Velarde

Backstreet Boys had local fans shrieking, screaming and singing along for a full hour and a half

By Pochole Concepcion
Contributor

REVIEW

ALL THAT SCREECHING could have crashed the Big Dome's ceiling.

Some 10,000 people spent an hour and a half orchestrating the high-decibel caveman of fans who watched the Backstreet Boys (BSB) in concert Friday night at the Araneta Coliseum.

BSB, recognized as the biggest-selling and most popular "boy band" in history, was obviously loved and admired by a predominately female fan base, who were ardent-ecstatic when BSB hit (main) national fame 10 years ago.

The non-stop shrieks that echoed throughout the gig were understandable; it was only the second time Filipinos have caught sight of the American dance-pop singing quintet in the flesh—never mind if Nick Carter looked 20 pounds overweight.

Struggling to keep in synch with the group's unique choreography, Carter was easily the most applauded, even as the rest effected their own shows of undercover idolatry. AJ McLean, who turned the group's sympathy a few years ago for going on voluntary drug rehab, was seen the most active, running and flexing his toned limbs all over the stage while ably fulfilling his solo vocal parts.

The others were no less engaging. Howie Dorough cut the most dashing figure every time he took center stage. Brian Littrell, who handled most of the singing parts with high notes, exuded confidence even if he was the shyest guy in the group. Kevin Richardson, the tallest, stood out while playing on a baby grand piano.

Wild, ecstatic

All these moments were marked with screams that bordered on the wild and ecstatic, even as BSB came out reeking in selfsame denim and dirty-animal like street beats and swaggers. OK, good looking street bums and charming muggers.

Boy band mania has long disintegrated in the United States, so why do the Boys remain such darlings to the local crowd? What's so outstanding anyway with BSB songs other than all of us have our heads?

The only logical explanation is that most of these songs, expertly crafted by studio songwriters and producers with an ear for teen appeal, hit the mark with a slice of the generation that came of age at the height of grunge and hard rock in the 1990s.

Is it right to surmise that those who grew up scoffing/gagging BSB preferred the simple joys effected by "As Long as You Love Me" and "Quit Playing Games (With My Heart)"—as opposed to the complicated emotions in, say, Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit"?

Or is it just a terrible case of missing out on the action, since the Backstreet Boys first visited the Philippines then as virtual unknowns, only to capture legions of fans first in Canada and Europe, before America hollowed out?

However which way we look, the admission was an admission that if you are to sing along to tunes we used to consider too lame to be part of our lives.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

VOL. 21 NO. 47

Unequal relationship

EDITORIAL

THE LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement last week adopted a concurrent resolution calling for the termination and renegotiation of the controversial treaty. The next step is to have the resolution adopted by both houses of Congress before it is submitted to the President.

We hope that the resolution will be adopted without delay by Congress to make it clear to the United States and the people, through their representatives, will not knock any inroads to the sovereignty of their country. Adoption of the concurrent resolution does not mean immediate abrogation of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement. The enactories has to be approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo, and even if approved, six months will have to pass before the VFA is automatically terminated.

The process for a review of Visiting Forces Agreement has to be set in motion. An actual case—the alleged rape of a Filipino woman by four US Marines—has shown that there is at least one lopsided provision of the agreement. A review is bound to expose other provisions disadvantageous to the Philippines.

The Philippines can, of course, try to exhaust all diplomatic means to get custody of the four accused US Marines. But if history is any guide, the US government is never going to hand over the four Marines to the Philippine government. Even during the time when the RP-US Bases Agreement was in force, the United States never gave custody of its accused servicemen to the Philippine government. In most cases, the accused were spirited away, and the Filipino victims in criminal cases were obtained justice.

The Philippines' only consolation in the present case is that the four US Marines have not been spirited away. In two recent cases—one in Japan and another in South Korea—the US military quickly turned over the accused servicemen to the host governments. It is said that in the case of the Philippines, the United States does not have any military bases, unlike in Japan and South Korea. Still, the basic fact is that a crime was allegedly committed on Philippine soil. A Filipino citizen was allegedly violated. And the crime alleged to have been committed had nothing to do with the US serviceman's official functions.

The US government's disregard of the Philippine court's warrant of arrest is a clear sign of disrespect for Philippine laws. The Bill Rights of the Philippine Constitution and the Philippine Rules of Court, patterned after those of the United States, give sufficient protection to the accused. There should be no concern that the rights of the American accused in the Subic rape case would be violated.

It is unfortunate that a 22-year-old Filipino woman was allegedly violated in this first case that is also a test case of the provisions of the Visiting Forces Agreement. But the case has shown very clearly that the VFA is disadvantageous to the Philippines. It is a case that strongly points up the need to terminate and renegotiate the agreement.

Under the VFA, the Philippines and the United States are not equals. The VFA allows the US to treat the Philippines not as a co-equal, sovereign state but as refuge, a vassal state. The agreement perpetuates the master-slave, patron-client relationship that was supposed to have ended when the US restored independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946.

The United States continues to treat the Philippines like a colony. It has not sent an ambassador to Manila in the past nine months; the US Embassy is headed by a charge d'affaires. When Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo went to the United States, he was met not by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He met not with an undersecretary, not with a deputy secretary, but with a deputy assistant secretary of state. Assistant na, deputy pa. That is how low the Philippines is in the esteem of the United States. And the two states are supposed to have special, brotherly relations.

Clearly, the Visiting Forces Agreement has to be renegotiated to make it more just to the Philippines. And the first step is for Congress to adopt the concurrent resolution approved by the Legislative Oversight Committee on the VFA. Adoption of the resolution will send a clear signal to the United States that the Philippines will no longer suffer an insult to its sovereignty.

A clutch of caudillos

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

Magdalo rebels threaten to employ bazookas to ousting the administration. With weapons paid by taxes from "synthetic drugs smuggled into Manila?" Or from "coup for hire" budgets?

And shouldn't our "saviors" first resign their commissions? In the Constitution says, citizen-troops support a professional military like India or British, but not a clutch of incipient caudillos as in Pakistan or Fiji. "How near the enemy," writer Luis de Sot Martin once said, "that we must risk gloriously tomorrow's peace today?"

Did the dissidents "escape"? Or did they enroll out after guards left the door open? The unlocked doors signal military displeasure with President Arroyo's skewed appointments, an officer told the Inquirer. "We decided not to do anything against the President but we will not stop anything against Jun."

Someone Bolinao makes destructive decision. So the question really is: Can outsider juntas contradict? "Who will watch the watchmen?"

At the age of four, with paper hats and wooden swords, we ate all peanuts, " actor Ronnie Lazaro once said. "But some of us never outgrow it."

The juvenile instinct, spurring military upstarts, ignores history. "Governments dominated by the military are the least likely to respond to the needs of the poor," notes the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (who study, "The Military in Politics."

Among them Nigeria, Uganda, Chile, Haiti, Colombia to Thailand and Burma failed to assure national stability. The New York Times summed up this failure in one pithy headline: "As Army Rules, So Does Ruin."

Thus, even the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in November 2004 acknowledged in its Asean Security Community Plan of Action that "basic countries shall not maintain any institutional and undemocratic changes of government."

In establishing the Philippine Military Academy, President Manuel Quezon "desired control over the nation's arsenals to establish civilian, whether nationalist lawyers from University of the Philippines or corporate executives from Ateneo," professor Alfred McCoy wrote in "Closer Than Brothers." "Quezon fostered a tradition of military professionalism . . . and showed resistance of military involvement in partisan politics," in dul Intsos of books.

Third Point graduate Fidel Ramos is a product of this professional military. He took power. "His opposition to close cronyism affirmed those values of apolitical service to the state. (But) his long service to the dictatorship gave him a tainted base from."

Each president "leaves an inevitable legacy in the values of officers it has nurtured and compromised," he said. Fidel. Class 1949 had 79 graduates who never faltered in constitutional fidelity. They have Quezon's stamp.

Marcos intended the coup genie with PMA Class 1971. Among its 51 graduates, Panfilo Lacson and four were linked to rebels, 43 were murdered, Gregorio Honasan and 14 others led coups that flopped. One general was convicted of graft.

Today's rebels were shaped by that armed legacy. "It remains linked to civil supremacy and military professionalism somehow survived the Marcos years." All survive to date show that people want constitutional hijacking.

Will that last under the impact of President Arroyo's "postponing for survival" practices in the military? "Long after a president's name is remembered only in street signs and school books," the Yale study notes, "an entire cohort of officers will bear the imprint of his or her directions."

Yes, yes. But who will save us, in the meantime, from our saviors?

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pcij.org)

Fine job

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IT WAS WITH A FOUR DEGREE OF RELIEF that I greeted last Sunday afternoon. I didn't know how much more of the ads I could take about Manny Pacquiao's impending fight with Erik Morales. Every time I watched the NBA on Solar Sports, I would be deluged by them. Some were completely silly—"a warrior (Morales) ravaged against a united nation," or words to that effect—which I suppose was meant to say "Any slow runner Amaury or Morales. . . let-me bring." The others were full throttle in horror mode: "The shoulders carry the hope of millions." Last I looked, it was a boxing bout and not a rescue mission to save those trapped in a hurricane.

But it is had, in fact, turned out that way. The match had taken on the aspect of life and death, of the very survival of the nation. My heart went out to the guy, I refused to imagine what would happen if he lost a second time to Morales. It wasn't just the chance for Mike Arroyo, Mikey Arroyo, Peoples Napolcs, Chavit Singson et al. to bask in his glory that was at stake, it was the chance for ordinary folk to feel good about themselves and the world that was so. The common man's levels of identification with Pacquiao were staggering. It wasn't just Pacquiao that stood to raise the ceiling if it had happened, it was an entire people.

I might as glimpse of that when I came home shortly before the fight and found the streets absolutely desolate, even for a Sunday afternoon. When I got home, a throng had gathered along the length of the street in our housing project, watching the TV sets with expectorous fair soldier anticipating a deliverance or a beheading. When the fight began, the collective groans and shouts of jubilation rocked our buildings. More than one of those voices that produced that booming drama.

I rejoice with other Filipinos over Pacquiao's feat, delivered not just as a timely answer to our fears when we most needed a deliverically essentially. This one is easily Pacquiao's best fight, even better than his demolition of now reigning super-featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera some years ago. This one will join the annals of boxing as a classic, along with "Thrilla in Manila" and "Rumble in the Jungle," if only among us Filipinos. This wasn't a fight between a slugger and a boxer the way the first match between Pacquiao and Morales was, this was a fight between two boxers at the top of their game. It's always unfortunate that someone has to lose in a match like this, but how nice I glad it wasn't Pacquiao.

The fight administrators would say the one thing Pacquiao did right this time was to stay in the center of the ring rather than on the ropes. They're right of course. But what's not, the one thing he did right this time—which should serve as a signal lesson for this country—was that he prepared for the long haul. He did not go into the ring expecting to do quick work, a knockout in the early going, as he seems to have done in the first fight. He went into the ring expecting a long drawn-out, and prepared for it. He got the win, and never's brilliantly. He was patient all the way, though he boxed intelligently, and the patience paid off in boxing as in anything worth doing, there are few shortcuts, there are few easy paths.

Today, Pacquiao is no longer recognized to be Filipino. What it has is tremendously future attributes, which was Mike Arroyo and Chavit Singson climbing into the ring to whoop it up with the victor. Rama Mauricio is the source of the text that swiftly went around, the capital supporting value the public thought about Pacquiao's manoeuvres when he landed a failed excuses to see the Fight netted him to say (translating it into regular English): "We watched Pacquiao hit Morales in 34 rounds or Bucksnell. It was a great fight. We were all happy, and for a while, we forgot our problems with ZTE and her corrupt government. But after the fight when we left you see how Mike Arroyo embracing Pacquiao. The audience in the stands/house booed loudly. Even if we were and are happy we haven't forgotten their corruption."

The crowd and company being there was in fact a rude reminder of it. It was like waking up from a dream to a living nightmare. What their contribution was to Pacquiao's victory only they can say. They didn't train, they didn't sweat, they didn't taste leather. All they did was fly to Las Vegas and place bets. Of course, they will say they used their own money, but that money used to be the taxpayers before they made it their own. I do not recall that they blamed themselves for Pacquiao's loss the last time he fought Morales, or had their photos taken with him in a show of profound commiseration. As to their pompous doing-nothing, one would imagine the government officials of Mexico who knew how to prop an indeed Morales himself. Why God should parricidals want to favor or them rather than to Wounded rung, well, they must have different Gods.

For all Alonzo's relentless pummeling of the viewer with its ads, or at least took a rich whiff of its smoke, it got its money's worth in much was. Had Pacquiao lost, all those ads would be worthless. It deserves all the rewards it gets from his victory.

As for the Filipino officials who crowded at ringside, all they deserve is what they got from the fans—boohoo!. While at that, I don't know that there were any libations at the club in the same vein with them. For most other countries, including the proxies over like Mexico, boxing is a source of national pride but it is not something one puts in the taxpayers' tab to add of legislation.

Congratulations, Manny. Decidedly. Famously and honestly did his job and made us proud. Till we lady and gentlemen.

When will you do yours?

To senators: Be not afraid to debate

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA, CAMPING ON the dubbed program *Cedie Alvarez* and I on four every Tuesday morning, presented various arguments for a shift to a parliamentary-cum-presidential form of government. This includes the fact that governments all over Europe, to the most successful, right economies of Asia, e.g., Thailand, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, as well as those to the East Pacific such as Australia and New Zealand, are all parliamentary.

In vain, we raised the issues supposedly in the minds of people. Such as, if parliamentarism is the best, and in a two-party system, wouldn't this promote even more instability? JDV replied that a safety net against frequent change of governments is proposed in the new Constitution. It provides that in an interim period, members of the House elected within 15 years after parliamentary elections seek to allow the new government to get its moorings, and 2. To some holders the best elections to confirm or reject changes for the next campaign. Thus, since 10% for three of the first four years of Parliament, the government remains stable and only in the middle two years can it be voted out.

Senator frequently asked question is, how can a parliamentary government deliver under our present set-up where politicians move from party to party. 80% agreed that a parliamentary government is a party government where the responsibility for what happens to the country rests with the ruling party. To ensure this, he said the new constitution will penalize political turncoats. If an MP wants to change party affiliation, he has to resign his seat first. JDV also pointed out that a composition provision will prohibit state subsidy for the election expenses of the two major political groups, as in many other countries. The subsidy be stopped, would eliminate the election expenses of candidates, lessening the temptation for corruption in government.

* * *

JDV ended with an appeal to the senators to join the debate over Charter change. Let's talk about it.

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

he said, stressing that while he and other financial sectors presented seven reforms to the proposed Constituent, "What measures have we in Congress, to address the few's who see another?"

Fair enough. The senators should not be afraid to debate even if they feel they are an endangered species.

Pilots's goal is that three senate who meet opposition to our society must to talk about Charter change. Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales has opened somewhat as saying he's open to change "as long as it's for the good of the country and not for the self-interest of politicians." Interim chairman Joaquin Bernas opined that with the Senate's bond increasing, despite, he Senate could reconsider or not senate "that the senators cannot ignore" such as unified reforms in the Constitution. By the way, Dr. Bernas revealed in our radio show that one indication of President Macapagal-Arroyo's unwillingness to push for Charter change is her lack of leadership in the Committee on the Re-Examining of ruling retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide to be presidential adviser on electoral reforms.)

The more debates there are about Charter change, the more our people will be politically educated, so they can form more mature judgments in the plebiscite.

* * *

Two big business open this Thursday, Jan. 26 at the Manila Hotel. One is the Bankers Forum's Philippines Dialogue which will be held simultaneously with the launch of the Cemetra Democratic International (CDI) thin Pacific, the first regional political organization in Asia constituted to match the political parties of the world's five major People's Party. Those main events are under the auspices of CDI, composed of 119 member parties, and the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats. President Arroyo, former Vice Presidents Habi Ramos and Dr. Sereno. The meeting draws to Manila prominent senior parliamentarians from Europe and Asia, among them former Spanish Prime Minister and current EPP president Jose Ms. Aznar, Dutch Prince Nicolaos Rasmidjik, Dur Fernandez Castri, president of the Italian Chamber of Deputies and current CDI vice president and party presidents of Japan, Malaysia and Thailand.

Representatives of major religions will also be attending the interfaith dialogue, which began as a brainchild of Dr. Sereno to resolve world conflicts based on religion. CDI's basis for her activity's ideas and why proposed it to US President George Bush during her state visit to Washington three years ago. He following year the EP initiative was adopted formally by the United Nations and launched during its 60th anniversary last September.

* * *

The other anticipated event is the five city tour of the Carnation, dubbed the "three moments singing tour" because it will be held in three cities. Billed as "The Way You Look Tonight," "I Only Have Eyes for You," "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing," "Feelings" and the theme from the "Titanic." Their theme, "Love never wills to die," is a tribute to the fifth anniversary of the Manila Bond for the benefit of the Inner Wheel Clubs of the Philippines. Marcia Wi, session in flagship project: a life care center for every club. "Pinoy acting" by the carnation, as they are known, will be held at the Araneta Coliseum, the Cebu Coliseum and the Davao Coliseum.

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Object lessons

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

IT WAS MOVIE WRITER CRISTY FERMIN (OUT of the army of reporters and commentators dispatched to cover the Peoplenet-Meralco bout in Las Vegas) who last stumbled up the import of Pacquiao's current one: the Mexican boast.

According to Filipino, Mexican and Mexican "Di, what the Ring looking so handsome, and left a while last affiliated) and swollen," Said, another top to impress, he boasted straight to the hospital, in fact.

Indeed, at least as far as women in the arena and attending the bout consisted were concerned, among the distinctions between the two fighters, apart from Mexican superior touch and the wanton display of tattoos, was the fact that he was the better looker, boasting good looks, quite a contrast to the homely Gerardo Gatchalian's Pinoy ex-Pinoy version.

Still, however much we may like the attraction of blonded beauties, we must belong to Pacquiao's camp, part of the "Sino Nanood si Jinkinson," as the paper's magnificent headline blared yesterday, that emerged as the climactic moment on the 24th round when Pacquiao brought blondies to his knees.

Such was the build-up and the pathetic lovers' whipped up prior to the fight that at the early rounds, when the fight was a pitter-patter affair, we were ready to give Pacquiao would be in for his money. Mexico was still in good form, and going as good as he got, and it struck me that Pacquiao would be in for more than just paying looks and research if he hadn't noticed he should be succumb to the Mexican.

* * *

Still Pacquiao simply lucky that a confluence of factors—blondies' weight problems, his powerful punches and some brains in our corner—had been honed by hard work, disciplined training and conditioning, not to mention a new brand of gloves—and to such a decisive victory?

Yesterday's offensive in this paper rightly pointed out that the right knocked hood to be knitted from Pacquiao's achievement. And the first and most important is that not one—so—do the thing, mothered, in business and in life—is attained only with hard work, disciplined training and excellent preparation, coupled of course with one's natural gifts.

Balls—in fact or divine intervention—may play a role, but it is foolhardy to rely only for more and more, including the kind of human eyes are from here, to make your way in this world.

On the way, or the supermarket room after Pacquiao's victory, we spotted unusually long lines at the cashier counters, normally only seen shopping center rush. Folks were patiently queuing to make sure they got a chance at the (reasonably large) lotto jackpot—P120 million plus, last Sunday.

"I wonder what I'll do with all that money?" my son intuitively mused, giving voice perhaps to all the silent hopes of the thousands of lotto hopefuls.

And what's here ephemeral object lessons are, especially in the euphoric wake of a shared sensational victories. Pacquiao may have shown us what swashbuckling and training, and faithful compliance with a game plan and fight strategy could produce. But the mastery of happiness still count on luck and providence for a big out of their powers, maybe they have little faith in the fairness of the system. Or maybe they know luck here must be the odds-on favored upside Bush.

* * *

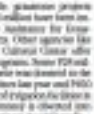
BUT STUNNED glued to the TV set, basking in the afterglow of Pacquiao's win, until we came the face of Senate Sen. Chiz Escudero flashed on the screen. Sen. Mike Arroyo on the TV screen. It was then I decided my battles go on until the rest of our lives, inside the governs.

The governors who made the pilgrimage to Las Vegas to be with Pacquiao when he entered the ring to be spotted in the crowd of boxing aficionados to

That time of year

Sense and Sensibility

Bambi L. Harper



A total of 340 small-scale grassroots projects coming from P1 million to P5 million have been implemented under the Gawad Kalinga for Kristmas Project. Other agencies like the Japan International Cooperation Agency gave scholarships and teaching programs. Some P20 million worth of lighting equipment was donated to the Cultural Center of the Philippines last year and P400 million for the rehabilitation of typhoon-hit areas in Isabela. Of course, the money is channeled to the wrong pockets, 40,000 farmers should benefit.

There's a lot more. He an anemic number one in San Rafael, Bulacan, then carries on typhoons and the San Pedro Conservation project in Bataan (P12,321). I was pleased to see that 1,000 boys and girls in Laguna City (P65,000), construction of medium and hearth-size houses, school buildings and seaweed culturing, as well as toilet goods for disaster victims, Jewish. There's also the interest, however, about marketing whether all the money really went where it was intended.

Needless to say, certainly all this information left me mystified. Can you imagine the amount of work and time country executives had to put together just from August? If you should be a volunteer that it was your money that paid for this or that project, think again. Our taxes certainly they tell us where our money goes and the reason I am writing you going to support the many fine and decent representatives in office that were my accomplished to before they get elected. So when you look at road and see all that potholes it's not that

serve have abandoned by the outside world. It's that we don't know whether the limited goes to the right recipients and we have never personally attended to making her an accounting. And while I'm at it, what about all those bodies who become mysteriously true and caused untold suffering on the Filipino people? Have they donated their dirty deeds and sales and apologized?

Having vented my sentiment, I decided I needed a change of pace. Dyan was lunch at the German Club yesterday to be presided Business Hong Kong German with the Philippines. Guest speaking about a grand German-Australian business connection the club's esteemed Peter society.

In my history days from Goethe to number of first names to our Philippine-German Chamber and Those who made all kinds of contact phone calls down until Heinz Werke who trained Dyan Europe treasurer that was the one and only trained dancing place in Manila for many years and Dr. Heinz Berking, the family's CPA from the most disappointment from my face.

Much conflict there was the German hotel Gang former office when the Castellvi was named and welcome it with Bonn, Diplomats and physician with his own sponsored at San Ignacio in 1589. Bonn Bon can have been married by a Spaniard, but in 1853 it was taken over by two Germans, Heinrich Schmidt and Friedrich Bock.

There were many other Germans who came to the Philippines like Bruno Jagor, historian, ethnologist and geologist. He discovered a Neolithic axe in Limestone, Cemantoes but in 1868, the same year that Carl Semper, a German scientist from Switzerland, was a bank of the lower mouth of a stupidity explosion in Agusan.

And let's not forget Dr. Ferdinand Blumentritt, Rizal's friend, after whom an old Manila street is named.

More about the Dyanjuan soon also.

* * *

Comments to bambiharper@yahoo.com

Back for good

LAST JULY BALIKBAYANS, I WISHED TO STAY FOR AT LEAST 6 of the 30 days I'd spent in my native land. Before leaving for the country, however, I hoped that everything would still be the same. I was disappointed to see that a lot of the old familiar faces had left. But that if you are a good balikbayan, you will see some sites getting reacquainted with your hometown.

Much of the newly developed places are new to the heart of Manila but to other parts of the metropolis, has just have to go to their places to know that somehow our beloved country does look forward at some point through out, to the places we thought it would be.

Like any bold hope, I have been welcomed set to positive about when I will be leaving again! Which is sad, especially when I have been yearning to come home and give some thing back every country.

It is even sadder to hear people ask most of the time about who are leaving for what country and when and how. Back to my theme, I have learned that many of my good friends are no longer living in this country—for some people who had saved enough money to move to their "second home" when I had the good luck to speak to them before they left, I took care not to ask whether they would be coming back since I could see the yearning to leave in their eyes. It is not even fitting to joke about such deep emotions.

Lists go out that I decided to come back. I guess that after people experience living somewhere else, they have a change of perspective. If not, then the motherland will engage in renewed nationalism that has had those good luck hoping that somehow then will do the motherland proud in their new "home." It is the same as thousands of mothers are thrilled hoping all as students hard, every day I hear intending thoughts of how to be a better mother.

As a balikbayan, there are times just doubt and question the sanity of your own decision. But I likened myself to all those Chinese, Indians and, yes, Filipinos who believe that it is time to come back and help the motherland. It is the time where opportunities abound, despite all the political noise, the "drama" and the Philippines, and the problems, there are always considerations in this country. It is the time for those who left earlier to lay the ground work for the new Philippines. But it should be a collective effort of everyone concerned, especially the balikbayan who chose to come back. It is not fair to reduce our people about what we have been outside of the Philippines. To help "change" the mind of those that stay that country will do without its people. To like that love that a country says love our country with independence.

Like a true balikbayan, I have wasted primarily doing my own share. Working by day making plans by night. What kind of revolutionary is that does not believe plan? The plans to assist Filipinos here in coming to the country, or what every face shape, acquire, etc. It is the sad that Cumpaltas out of the slump we are experiencing, are the dollars that are sent by our beloved here abroad. A true democratic and free country is self-run, to consume the same, to families more. So-hold-hopes, we are an entrepreneur part of the needs of nation-building and we have become more important once our friends choose to come back.

But we should be careful not to devote to the pessimism that seems to have engulfed our kababayan since we have to seek out people who have the same love for our country and who have received education and helping our true harmony and progress. Let's not be "Sino Nanood si Jinkinson" here, we are an entrepreneur part of the needs of nation-building and we have become more important once our friends choose to come back.

But we should be careful not to devote to the pessimism that seems to have engulfed our kababayan since we have to seek out people who have the same love for our country and who have received education and helping our true harmony and progress. Let's not be "Sino Nanood si Jinkinson" here, we are an entrepreneur part of the needs of nation-building and we have become more important once our friends choose to come back.

People salute the balikbayan who come back and even hail us as heroes. Let's show them that even if coming home is widely seen as sacrifice, it is not an act of martyrdom. Martyrdom is reserved for something that is beyond redemption and our country aren't like that at all. The Philippines offers a lot of opportunities, and Filipinos just have to find them.

Annalyn Cheng, 28, used to work in Hong Kong as a program coordinator for disaster-relief events and is now home working in a small business firm.

Young Blood

Annalyn Cheng

Be sound. To know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Its authentic contributions from the twenty-something and below — Ed.

I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS REALLY AWESOME. BECAUSE OF the same kind of music, movies and TV shows, gossip, everything. But sometimes she gets on my nerves. She is a know-it-all and she has her facts right. Even when she's wrong, she doesn't fit. And it's on issue, she is half wise to bring one of them).

I know she grew up in a home where English is spoken, but she wasn't born in the United States. But since the entire home alone spending her summer vacation there, she seems to be better than me in the English department. Even when she tells it, it would seem like she knows everything and she has experienced everything, all because she was able to live part of her American Dream. She shops at Bestwell, wears Roxy or Billabong and a flip on her iPod in no necessary.

I don't really know why, but all this annoys me. Once I was told by the boy I used to have a crush on that my taste when she told me how much she was missing California, it was then that I realized how much of a Filipino I am, getting pissed at Americanized "Filipinos" who claim they're real Filipinos and real Filipinos who are like FilAms. It must have been so because all my friends were real Filipinos, and I had problems with the side whenever I heard her chatter about surfing Adidas or. I wanted to tell her off for being pa-cogeal. But she FilAm-pino-Australian blood kept me smiling and well-mannered and polite.

I've always wanted to scream at her when she talked that way, but then I wasn't sure what that was. Was it because I'm a Filipino, although she doesn't know how was subject to really much better and even more colorful than those of the bland, white and excitedly plain foreigners up north.

Those who know me are lucky to realize how proud and beautiful our country is. Some the Philippines, as many of the travel magazines call our country, is just waiting to be discovered by more and more Filipinos in the face of economic crisis, national problems and terrorist threats. If only they would look.

Isabelle Rodolfo, 13 is a high school freshman at Assumption Antipolo.

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My 'konyo' friend

Isabelle Rodolfo

CA vote on Palparan

LETTERS

THE BELL PLACE IN HIGHER HANDS: Are the letter, titled "CA members await history's judgment" (PDI, 1/12/06/05), of HALPA (Homicide Awareness for Justice and Peace) Lowella Bo Quinto and Egay Abanador's Ka Melendez, as well as the letter, titled "We must not wait for Amoyo to judge. Or members" (PDI, 1/11/06), of Arnold Van Fuga.

It must be stressed that the confirmation of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan's promotion by a majority vote of the Integrated Commission on Appointments (CA) was arrived at after a long and exhaustive deliberation, in accordance with existing rules. It should not be perceived as a "deplorable act."

Commission records will show that Palparan's appointment is the rank of major general's rate bypassed seven times. Between the receipt of his initial appointment on Oct. 20 2004 and his confirmation on Jan. 14, 2005—a period of almost 14 months—the CA heard an awful opposition to his confirmation. All of them were based on his alleged involvement in human rights violations, principally grounded on the principle of command responsibility. So less than three list representatives from Ocampo, Loretta Ann Rosales, Liza Maza and Crispin Beltran, among others, appeared and testified before the CA's Committee on National Defense. They were given ample opportunity to present, on behalf of several alleged victims, their evidence against Palparan.

While it is true that Palparan has been charged with human rights violations, our Appointments Review and Investigation Service (ARIS) found no pending criminal case filed against him before any court of law, as of the date of his confirmation. The commission was aware that Palparan was facing an investigation for human rights crimes. However, the commission members, after hearing the opposers and considering the documents they submitted, decided that a pending investigation does not constitute a bar to a confirmation, following the constitutional presumption of innocence until proven guilty. This is a policy the CA unanimously adheres to in its confirmation hearings.

It is therefore incorrect and misleading to say that our CA members "have shown no respect for our judicial system." On the contrary, those who oppose Palparan's rise have leads in our judicial system by filing charges against him in our courts of law. It is in the judicial forum that the guilt of Palparan can be properly determined, not in the CA.

Lastly, let it not be understood that this letter is meant to defend Palparan. This merely clarifies the legal process and factual questions each of the CA members considered in voting for or against his confirmation.

—SILVESTRE A. OPPUS JR.,
Office of the Secretary,
Commission on Appointments,
6/F PNB Building,
Financial Center, Pasay City

'Broken dreams' under repair

TRESPASSERS TO THE LETTER OF LOCKE and Ed Zantua titled "Boulevard of broken dreams" (PDI, 1/6/06), complaining about the dilapidated condition of Quirino Highway.

Parts of Nalanda–Sadsaja Highway (formerly Quirino Highway) in Quezon, which were heavily damaged by heavy rains in the last quarter of 2005, are undergoing repair by the Department of Public Works and Highways Quezon 4D, Tiaong.

Meanwhile, initial measures are being put in place for the rehabilitation of the section. The concreting of the gravel portions of the highway will start as soon as the P27 million earmarked for this undertaking becomes available. The DPWH would like to assure one and all that it is exerting all efforts to maintain or repair the road for the safety and convenience of the motoring public.

The deterioration of the Lamao section of the entire highway was caused by unregulated and increasing heavy traffic. To ensure public safety, continuous maintenance activities, such as stockpiling, hauling, spreading and compacting are being undertaken. And sometimes, these activities get delayed because of bad weather. Warning signs have been installed on both ends of the damaged road section to guide the traveling public. Likewise, a motorists' assistance center, located at the DPWH Lamao District Office, is on hand to help motorists in distress.

As soon as funds become available, the following road stretches along the Antipolo Highway will be rehabilitated: 111 kilometer (Km) to 105 kilometer along Tagkawayan-Del Gallego boundary; 121 Kilometer 113 to 261 at Barangay Masagana to Barangay San Sipocot Section; and 131 kilometer 264 to 288 from Barangay Magsi to Barangay Calauag, in Del Gallego Section.

—ELIZABETH P. PILORES, officer in-charge, Public Information Division, Department of Public Works and Highways, Manila

Veterans' share in GMA's P36-billion savings

ON BEHALF OF THE DAISY VETERANS federation, I would like to commend Sen. Aquilino "Pimentel Jr. on commending the allocation of part of the President's P36-billion savings to pay Filipino veterans their unpaid disability benefits amounting to P29 million.

I do not see any reason why the government has forgotten time and again the services of our veterans who are now living in "Dreamland of their life."

Please take action on their plight, Mr. President, now.

—LEDIA L. DELOSSADO,
Carlos Fernando Subdivision,
Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite

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Enchanting ad

I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE Enchanted Kingdom and its ad agency for their wonderful print ad (PDI, 1/15/06). The half-page ad put a spell on me and it hit my "sweet spot" really hard. The ad shows a trio and his two young grandsons, swinging on the lola's rocking chair, with some spell-legal-sentenced, obviously ordering a wild, fast-running roller-coaster ride in Enchanted Kingdom.

The solemn, old-fashioned living room provides a stark contrast to the youthful exuberance shown by the kids and lola. The three are in an antiquated role, with dark and heavy wooden furniture and walls, a matching grandfather's clock and dark-colored wooden floor. The kids' eyes are clear signs that these months are wide open (one cannot almost hear their yelling and feel their heartbeats. The lola's face paints a struggle between fear and exhilaration, with the latter slightly winning. Her huge eyeglasses barely clutching the tip of his nose, and his two hands holding his crotch (obviously, I could imagine him saying to himself: "Inumaya ang Coca-Cola dong, pinaubaan ko! Hay naku! Sa bus, sasamid ako!")

I was musing why the trio was chosen, instead of the father of the boys, but I guess some group must've outrage to the ad, more power, Perhaps, the ad creators wanted to remind us that a good laugh defies any age, that there is a kid in each one of us, that it's never late to yell out of fun, and that grandparents and grandchildren are the best of allies.

Brilliant. The small caption says: "The way it stays with you." Will the magic really stays with the character, as it stays with us. Mere person to Filipino creativity. And more visitors to Enchanted Kingdom.

—PAUL B. ESCAÑOSA,
pbescanosa@gmail.com

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Across the NATION

People's Choice
SUPER BRAND
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2005
SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000
SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999
PILOT
Synonymous with writing technologies
G-2
Ballpoint Refills
MAIL POINT
PEPE

200,000 liters of bunker fuel threaten Semirara marine life

By Hector P. Bergonia Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A MASSIVE OIL spill from a power barge threatens hundreds of hectares of mangroves and marine life in Semirara town in Antique as clean-up operations are slowed down by lack of equipment and personnel.

Nearly 200,000 liters of bunker fuel have contaminated 230 km of mangrove forests and 40 sq km of marine life off the coast of Semirara Island, said Senior Supt. Ricardo de la Flor, Coast Guard deputy commander in Western Visayas.

"It's the biggest oil spill in the country ever," De la Flor told the Inquirer in a telephone interview.

He said that based on aerial surveys, the oil spill covered about a five-kilometer shoreline of Semirara Island.

The oil spill occurred last Dec. 18 after Power Barge 106 of the National Power Corp. (Napocor) ran aground 200 meters off the shores of Sitio Bobog, Barangay Semirara, one of three villages of Semirara Island.

The island is part of a group of nine islands of Caluya town, Antique, at the southern tip of Mindoro Island. It is the site of the Semirara Mining Corp., the biggest coal mine in Asia.

Quoting a Coast Guard report, De la Flor said the barge was being towed by a tugboat on its way to Oriental Mindoro from Masbate when it was battered by strong winds and waves.

The barge was estimated to be carrying 800,000 liters of bunker oil, he said.

Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gunsi said in a telephone interview that at least 195,000 liters of bunker oil were spilled in the waters of Semirara.

The barge was removed two days later and maneuvered to Batalan near town in Caluya Island on Dec. 27. It is now undergoing repair at the Keppel shipyard in Batangas City.

At the site of the oil spill are 56 ha of a mangrove project of the Semirara Mining Corp., 80 ha of reforested mangrove forests of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and 100 ha of natural grown mangroves.

The oil spill has also contaminated fish sanctuaries and damaged sea grasses, coral reefs, seaweed farms and other marine life.

Clean-up operations supervised by a Coast Guard task force, headed by Capt. Arturo Oliveros, Coast Guard commander in Western Visayas, were being hindered by the lack of equipment and personnel.

At least 12 Coast Guard personnel and residents of the island have been spraying detergents to remove the sticky and thick fuel. They also have been manually scooping contaminated material since Dec. 19.

The collected materials were placed in sacks and thrown in a temporary dump on the island.

The clean-up team has sprayed 6,000 liters of chemicals and collected 4,800 sacks of contaminated material since the start of the cleanup.

But De la Flor said this is only enough for 5-6 percent of the work to remove the oil spill.

"At this rate we are going, it would take six months to complete the cleanup," he said.

De la Flor said the clean-up team needed more personnel and equipment like speedboats and oildbooms.

Napocor president Cyril Del Callar said in a statement that the Napocor was expediting the cleanup and would shoulder all the expenses of more personnel in the area.

The cost of the cleanup would run to P50 million.

The state-owned agency will allocate the cost of deploying around 500 to 600 additional personnel and provide the logistics and resources needed for the cleanup and the rehabilitation of the affected areas.

Del Callar said it will take at most two months to finish the cleanup with the additional personnel and resources.

He said the Napocor takes full responsibility. "It was an accident... There were really strong winds and waves at that time, forcing the power barge to run aground. It was a very unfortunate incident, but everything is under control now," Del Callar said.

Caluya Mayor Domingo Pantoja Jr. said the oil spill destroyed the livelihood of at least 1,000 residents of Barangay Semirara who are dependent on seaweed farming and fishing.

"What is important is that the Napocor will shoulder the damages and provide compensation for the residents," Pantoja said in a telephone interview.

GenSan crime fall linked to Pacquiao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—ON the day Manny Pacquiao fought Mexican Erik Morales, the city's crime rate was unusually down and police attributed it to the fight.

Senior Supt. Alfredo Tamayo, city police chief, said only two incidents were listed in the police blotter on the day Pacquiao beat his Mexican foe—a stray bullet report and a murder case.

Almost everybody was busy watching the rematch between Pacquiao, the World Boxing Council Super Featherweight international champion, and three-time world champion Morales.

The streets were almost empty as few public vehicles were out to ply their routes. Only fast food stores, barber shops and bars with cable TVs were teeming with customers.

Many people believe even pickpockets, robbers and snatchers took time off to watch the Pacquiao-Morales fight.

Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. said Pacquiao made General Santos and the country proud, and that the almost-zero crime rate during the day was a bonus.

Acharon said the city is preparing not only a hero's welcome but a grand celebration in time for Pacquiao's homecoming.

Time to watch last year, when the Filipino ring idol went home here after losing via a unanimous decision against Morales. Reception was given a lukewarm welcome by the city government. Agustin C. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Hike in taxes in Cordillera trading post seen to raise prices of Metro vegetables

BAGUIO CITY—VEGETABLE PRICES in Metro Manila may suddenly increase in the next few weeks after the municipal government of La Trinidad in Benguet, which hosts the largest vegetable trading post in the Cordillera, raised taxes from 1.00 to 3.00 per metric ton (mt).

The La Trinidad government executive ordered the increase in the tax rate, which is the first in 10 years.

CEBU CITY: The roar of the crowd as the Japan Red wins Pacquiao starts to dominate the fight by the sixth round of the 12-round bout could be heard across the island. YOY CHUA/INQUIRER

'Most watched TV event in RP'

THE BOXING MATCH THAT gripped Filipinos from all walks of life for a few, fleeting hours last Sunday has become the most watched television event in the Philippines.

According to AGB Nielsen Media Research (Philippines), the rematch between Manny Pacquiao and Erik Morales registered a staggering 59.3 percent rating or 2.073 million households in Metro Manila and urban areas in Batangas, Laguna, Cavite and Rizal.

AGB Nielsen general manager Mona Reñarena said the match easily surpassed the previous all-time top rater, the blockbuster love team tandem "Roanda," which had a higher rating of 48.1 percent but was equivalent to only 1.448 million households in its July 15, 2000 episode.

In terms of individuals, 3.261 million watched the Pacquiao-Morales rematch versus the 1.788 million for Roanda.

The match also registered the highest audience share (which computes program ratings during the same time slot) to its total block of 79.5 percent compared to Roanda's 58.3 percent.

AGB Nielsen uses an independent and transparent audience measurement system for its ratings that are used by media planners and advertisers for their transactions.

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Between ABS-CBN's coverage of their television series through ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. and Solar Entertainment Corp., started airing the first video from the Pacquiao-Morales rematch at around 9 p.m. on the dot, which is usually prime-time hour in the country in the 10th round and screened a technical knockout.

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Between noted that viewership for the match was nearly double the television ratings of Pacquiao's previous title matches with Morales and Juan Manuel Marquez which scored an identical 33 percent rating.

The move by Solar Entertainment, which owns the rights to Top Rank boxing matches in the Philippines, to switch from the state-owned GMA-7 to ABS-CBN 2 for the Pacquiao-Morales rematch proved to be a reputation one.

"The match benefited greatly from the broader coverage of ABS-CBN," Reñarena said.

ABS-CBN made the rare move of giving away one of its prime time slots by carrying a block time deal with Solar apparently to ride on Pacquiao's crowd-pulling prowess among Filipinos. The match is likely to boost ABS-CBN's bid to regain its dominance in the local TV ratings game after losing the top spot to GMA Broadcasting Corp. in 2004.

JV slams GMA for allies' trip to Las Vegas

MAYOR JV EJERCITO OF SAN Juan yesterday scored President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration for financing the trip of supporters to Las Vegas to launch Manny Pacquiao's fight.

"We allowed our funds to launch an activity that's not a family endeavor," said Ejercito yesterday. But this time, he said it would be "bigger and more exciting."

Another congressional dissenter and an additional financial scandal awaited Pacquiao from the Philippine Independence, said Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"We brought great honor to the Filipinos. He joined the morale of the Filipinos and the Malaysian race," De Venecia said.

But it will be the second time that Pacquiao will be invited to Congress to receive a congressional award for his success in the boxing ring.

Three resolutions hailing Pacquiao also were filed by Senators Manuel Villar Jr., Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan.

At least three resolutions were filed in the House commending Pacquiao. The authors were Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas, South Cotabato and General Santos City Rep. Arthur Pingoy Jr., Antonio Cuenco and Bukidnon Rep. Jose Miguel Zubiri.

"It is the best thing proof that the Filipino athlete, given sufficient support and incentives, can by sheer hard work, persistence and discipline, stand as par and even rise above other athletes of the world in excellence and valor," said Gullas.

Though the entire nation was happy and proud of Pacquiao's victory it was said that millions of dollars were brought out of the country for the trip of Mr. Arroyo's close allies.

"Millions of Filipinos are suffering and we are just trying to make ends meet for the survival of their families," Herrera said in a statement.

"It is very insensitive of those officials of the mayors, Cabinet members, governors, congressmen, directors of the different (government) corporations and the whole Pagcor (Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) board and persons identified with the Arroyo clique to splurge money in Las Vegas while the whole nation struggles to keep its head above water," he said.

Mutineer to Esperon: 'There's time for parting'

ONE OF THE EMBROILED SOLDIERS who foiled an Army directive removed a week ago said their escape was a show of defiance to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Army Lt. Lt. Lawrence Ian Jone told ABS-CBN in an interview aired yesterday that the government could not stop an impending uprising.

"That is our strong statement that we will remain defiant. We have not changed," Ian Jone said.

He also said: "Capturing or killing us is not the solution to the problem. It is like water; it will continue to flow no matter how

you block it."

Ian Jone said he and Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza and fellow Lt. Lieutenants Jonny Bacsarpa and Patricio Bumidang escaped by creating a diversion.

He said they were able to leave though the compound's gate.

"Those were our out of the gate, we just walked," he said.

Ian Jone had one message for Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon: "Sir, I have the highest respect for you. We fought side by side in Mindanao. But the time has come for us to part ways." Dona Pazzibugan

RP to roll out red carpet in ...

From page A1

sure that Dante Ramona of the Ninoy Aquino International airport Public Affairs Office says are still closely guarded secret.

"We already have been in Hawaii advance," said Ramona yesterday. But this time, he said it would be "bigger and more exciting."

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Three resolutions hailing Pacquiao also were filed by Senators Manuel Villar Jr., Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan.

At least three resolutions were filed in the House commending Pacquiao. The authors were Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas, South Cotabato and General Santos City Rep. Arthur Pingoy Jr., Antonio Cuenco and Bukidnon Rep. Jose Miguel Zubiri.

"It is the best thing proof that the Filipino athlete, given sufficient support and incentives, can by sheer hard work, persistence and discipline, stand as par and even rise above other athletes of the world in excellence and valor," said Gullas.

Though the entire nation was happy and proud of Pacquiao's victory it was said that millions of dollars were brought out of the country for the trip of Mr. Arroyo's close allies.

"Millions of Filipinos are suffering and we are just trying to make ends meet for the survival of their families," Herrera said in a statement.

"It is very insensitive of those officials of the mayors, Cabinet members, governors, congressmen, directors of the different (government) corporations and the whole Pagcor (Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.) board and persons identified with the Arroyo clique to splurge money in Las Vegas while the whole nation struggles to keep its head above water," he said.

Ian Jone had one message for Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon: "Sir, I have the highest respect for you. We fought side by side in Mindanao. But the time has come for us to part ways." Dona Pazzibugan

AFP show of force ...

From page A1

more with his statements last week that the period from Friday night to Saturday was the "critical period" for a coup.

Brawling Gonzalez also said there could be "ranks in the military ranks but that these manipulators in the name of the Army mutineers would be only a small fraction of the Armed Forces.

The 600 troops have denied there were such coup plans.

As Senga and the other senior generals expressed their loyalty to Mr. Arroyo, the national police announced a reward of P1M,000 for information leading to the capture of each of the five escaped officers belonging to the Magdalo group.

For only the second time in his 11 month term, Senga appeared in a news conference with the heads of the three major service commands to say that the military is "united."

Wary lies were Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes and Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Doropan.

Threat levels

"OK, I think we can say that there is a threat [against the government]," Senga said after previous questioning by the media, quickly adding: "But as to the level, as to the time, chances have their levels, too."

Senga was unequivocal about the military's support for Ms Arroyo.

"The AFP leadership, the Armed Forces is intact. The Air Force, the Army and the Navy are composed of dedicated officers. May I reiterate one still, one declaration that the AFP chooses not will remain apolitical and follow the constitutional dictum of non-intervention in politics."

Still verifying

The news conference was prompted by text messages that Senga had composed in jest.

The first time the military's "Big 5" supposedly met was in Senga's office last Sept. 28, when they announced that retired Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan would be court-martialed for torpedoing before the Senate about the military's fertilizer fund scam.

Senga said the military was still "verifying" Gonzalez's claim, based on intelligence reports, of a coup threat.

"The good secretary may have other sources," Senga said.

Not that serious

Asked how serious the threat was, Senga appeared to struggle with his answer.

"You know, it's not that—I don't think we should—maybe at this point I cannot say that this threat is that serious," he said.

Senga would not say who had been identified as part of the threat, except to say that the military had "some leads."

Chasing the others

"We know some. We are still finding out who the others are," he said.

Neither would he say if the threat came from within or outside the military.

"Maybe the term loyalty check is not very accurate," Senga said. "We are verifying what the situation is, so we are talking to people, we are looking at what's going on. So we cannot just say it's a loyalty check per se."

Pressed on what concrete measures they have initiated, Senga replied: "There are indications of some intentions. But intention is different from capability, or disposition from some things."

Reyes: 'No crack'

Air Force chief Reyes denied that his decision to allow 12 detained Oakwood mutineers to publicly air their defiance of Ms Arroyo indicated a crack in the military leadership.

"I wouldn't categorically say that there's any crack in the leadership in the Air Force and in the Armed Forces. We are loyal to our constitutional mandate and we are squarely behind the chain of command," Reyes said.

Gen. Generoso Senga would not waver and cracks in the military ranks.

DOJ probe panel

"That's possible," he said. "The possibility is always there. Maybe these Magdalo people have some friends. Their families have friends, but I don't think it's significant."

Gonzalez also announced the formation of a five-man panel to investigate the origin of the armaments.

Gonzalez said the panel should determine the circumstances of their escape and the persons responsible for it, as well as the existence of any possible conspiracy.

1,000 posters

National police spokesperson Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil said they had printed some 1,000 posters with the faces of the fugitives for distribution to police stations, bus terminals, air and seaports and piers.

"Tapunin mo sa! Head 117 o text to 2020, the PNP text hotline," he said. With a report from Jaziye A. del Prado

171 power blows made the difference

From page A1

mit if the light were governed by amateur rules.

Anyway, some of the punches thrown by Pacquiao were close to knockouts, the reason Morales had to be brought to the hospital for a post-fight checkup.

With the humiliation suffered by Morales, there came reports he had suffered cracks both in his nose and his 6th ego.

"That was what Gary Mata, Pacquiao's promoter, was telling us," hurled Arlt de Guzman, a UH-based Filipino therapist who assisted Team Pacquiao here.

De Guzman said the report on the severe injury suffered by Morales has yet to jeopardy a third fight between the main protagonists in last Saturday's highly successful boxing match.

"We can't expect a rematch. That guy Marcos had been badly beat," De Guzman quoted the Arizona-based promoter saying.

So far, there has been no unanimous opinion being lined up for Pacquiao, although Magdalo believe a rematch between Morales and Marco favors the latter would be a blockbuster.

Barnes, the reigning world super featherweight champion, lost to Pacquiao by TKO in the 11th round in their ecstatic bout one year ago.

New symptoms of military unrest emerging

From page A1

ment. Military unrest is a more serious concern than the street-driven protests and legal challenges to the always administration's legitimacy because the former raises the potential of armed conflict.

Symptoms

The new symptoms of military unrest emerged following the removal and reappointment Army commander of Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to head the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Esperon replaced Gen. Generoso Senga, who was given the rank of lieutenant general upon his retirement.

Esperon was sworn in by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. in a ceremony at the Philippine Military Academy in Fort Gregorio del Pilar, Baguio City.

Senga's retirement was originally scheduled for Jan. 27, but was moved up to Jan. 20 after he was relieved from his post.

Senga was relieved from his post after he was implicated in the alleged plot to assassinate President Arroyo and her family and key officials of the government.

Esperon's appointment was made despite opposition from some members of the military establishment.

Esperon's brother-in-law, Brig. Gen. Rodolfo Lim, was relieved from his post as commander of the Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division based in Davao City.

Lim was relieved after he was implicated in the alleged plot to assassinate President Arroyo and her family and key officials of the government

METRO

Text anyone feedback e-mail at metro@inquirer.com.ph (Globe) or 883-5000

Editor Victor G. Dipasupil

3 officers in Oakwood mutiny face arrest

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A RAGGED SECRETARIAL TRIAL Court (RTC) judge yesterday ordered the issuance of arrest warrants for charges against officers who escaped a short-lived mutiny in 2003 but escaped from detention last week.

The warrants of arrest were ordered issued by Judge Oscar B. Pimentel of Branch 148 for Capt. Nicanor Faeldon and 1st Lieutenant Lawrence Ilas Alan and Sonny Sarmiento, who, together with 321 Lt. Patricio Bautista, sneaked out of their cell in Fort Bonifacio at around 9 p.m. last Jan. 17.

Subsequ, Ilas Alan and Sarmiento are among 31 junior military officers who are facing coup d'état charges in connection with the Oakwood Premier apartment-hotel in Makati City in July 2003.

Bautista, on the other hand, is facing coup d'état charges along with 99 other soldiers for his role in the failed mutiny.

Pimentel ordered the issuance of the arrest warrants following a motion filed by the Department of Justice last October. State prosecutors have also sought hold departure orders for the junior officers.

The judge asked Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon and State Prosecutor Jose Nerves for documents to support their petition.

Pimentel earlier issued an arrest warrant for Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, one of the leaders of the Oakwood mutiny, who escaped from his military escort after attending a court hearing on Dec. 19.

At the hearing yesterday on the coup charges against the soldiers, Faeldon asked the court to cite in contempt members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP). The detainees' counsellors, for allowing 21,001 Antonio Trillanes, another leader of the mutiny, to speak to the media during the previous hearing last Tuesday.

"The bottom line is the body had been ordered by the court to apply shelter security measures after Faeldon's escape. Then they allow Trillanes to air his statement before the media," Faeldon told the lawyers.

After Pimentel admonished her Tuesday's hearing, Trillanes gave a statement to the media appealing to the nation to decide whether or not they would stick to the status quo or take action to effect a change.

As his guards looked on, Trillanes granted a 20-minute interview to television news anchor before he was brought back to his detention cell.

"The argument is it runs counter to freedom of speech. Everybody is entitled to that, but so are others. Trillanes is not an ordinary citizen. You have all the facilities right there with you are on trial for criminal charges, you should be prohibited from being interviewed," Faeldon said.

"The issue is focused on the case of the former president or the fraudulent one," he added, referring to jailed former president Joseph Estrada, who is on trial for plunder, and has been prohibited from issuing statements to media.

NBI to look into killing of slay suspect

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) is looking into the death of robbery suspect Shalim Bacala, who was tagged by some policemen as the second suspect in the killing of the grandson of a Quezon province town mayor last week.

NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda said they have subpoenaed PO2 Arnie de Leon and PO2 Celso Toledo of the Manila Police District (MPD) station 6 to shed light on the circumstances surrounding Bacala's death. The victim's family has filed a complaint with the NBI, asking the bureau to investigate the incident.

MPD station 6 chief Supt. Marcelino Pedroso Jr. had said earlier that Manila police were not in the clear after allegedly grabbing Dr. Leon's gun last Friday, was identified by his companion as the driver of the motorcycle used in connection with the killing of 24-year-old Manuel Zachary Escudero. Pedroso explained that they arrested Bacala and his friend Leopoldo Villanueva in Pasay City only Friday as suspects in the killing of Escudero.

The victim was a grandson of Councilor "Jake" Escudero, town of Tiaka Escudero, a popular mayor in Tayug, Quezon. The young Escudero was walking at the corner of F. Ocampo and Antillano Streets in Malate when a motorcycle-riding tandem suspects mistaken his cell phone. Escudero was shot dead dead on arrival at the hospital after he was allegedly shot in the chest by Pfizers Bacala.

Pedroso said that while Bacala was being interrogated by De Leon, the suspect requested to go to the comfort room. Toledo was ordered to escort the suspect when Bacala grabbed De Leon's gun. Pedroso added.

However, Esmeralda said that what his men visited the scene when Escudero was shot, they found out that Bacala was already there as a suspect. "The witnesses identified that Bacala, who was earlier presented as the gunman, was the prime suspect in the killing," Esmeralda said. He added that the Escudero family told the NBI that Dionel's alleged "friend" was involved in a football pool syndicate. Similarly, Dominador Bermido, chief of the MPD Homicide Section, however, said he had not received an official report of Martin's arrest.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

A woman walks past two homemade gas cylinder loaded on Tondo, Manila. Although the number of unions plying Mayo roads have decreased over the years, cities can still be seen in Binondo, the barrio packing their plumbing alongside propane and cars.

Crackdown vs illegal LPG dealers looms

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) TO gather its team to conduct spot raids soon that will run after liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) dealers who engage in illegal and unsafe business practices.

Under the memorandum of agreement signed recently by the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Task Force LPG will crack down on traders that sell under filled, dilapidated, uncertified and unsafe LPG cylinders.

Task force

A special task force will be established for each city and municipality of Metro Manila, as well as units to be set up in all provinces and cities nationwide.

The task force will be composed of the governor or mayor in a particular area, officials and representatives of the DILG, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP), DOE and DTI.

According to the energy department, out of the 1,175 LPG establishments that it inspected with the DTI last year, 49% or 576 premises were found to be selling substandard and unsafe LPG cylinders, valves, regulators, or hoses or other units that had no user antigen, or had unsafe and inappropriate units.

"Should there be violations found during the regular monitoring and the joint operations, upon recommendation by the DOE and the DTI, members can immediately be apprehended by the concerned LGUs," the DOE said in a statement yesterday.

Apart from the corresponding fines, enactment includes the confiscation of defective and non-compliant cylinders and/or closure of the establishments and suspension or revocation of business permits," it added.

Violations

Among the illegal practices are underfilling, as well as tampering, altering or modifying the LPG cylinder by changing the valve or tampering or re-labelling it.

Also prohibited are the unauthorized refilling of cylinders, the absence of a crash-automatic valve and excess flow valve, or incorrect service weight markings.

RP's 'walking encyclopedia' dies

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE WALKING "BOOK OF KNOWledge," Emerito "Ka Emet" Baron, died yesterday in his Mandaluyan, Cebu home.

He was 63 years old.

ABS-CBN, the TV network that reported Baron to popularity after he became fan sensations on its news program, TV Patrol, expressed condolences over his death.

"The passing of our beloved 'Ka Emet' brings great sorrow to the ABS-CBN family," it said in a statement.

Describing Baron as "an icon in Philippine news and the beloved resident authority" on TV universal, said "Ka Emet endeared himself to the public as a credible source. TV personality, a news junkie and the country's walking encyclopedia."

Baron was taken to the Mandaluyan City Medical Center (MCMC) at around 9:30 a.m. after his daughter, Shirley, found him unconscious and cold. had.

Earlier, Shirley found her way into her father's room when he failed to come down for breakfast.

Although Baron was declared dead on arrival when he was brought into the hospital, MCMC physicians Gilson Garde and Gean Bernice still tried to revive him, the hospital's information personnel told the Inquirer yesterday.

The doctors said Baron could have died of a silent myocardial infarction or of complications from diabetes.

"Relatives said he just didn't make it," said the owner of the Zenaida Lim-Zu Mitra Presidential Funeral Home. Baron's body was taken from the hospital.

The Inquirer tried to speak with Baron's relatives but they did not want to give further details yet.

Baron's body, placed in a silver casket, was brought to the Sto. Niño Chapel of the Divine Mercy Chapels Inc. in Tanjon, Mandaluyan City, in the afternoon.

The schedule of interment has yet to be announced, but the Inquirer learned from the Zenaida Lim-Zu Mitra Funeral Home that he would be buried at the Inquirer Memorial Park in Barotac, Cebu.

Baron started his career in radio in 1965 on "Mga Gintong Kasabihan," an educational program, as a broadcasting announcer.

He later moved to dzMB where he hosted the program "Knowledge Power," which also became a TV show on ABS-CBN.

Mike Defensor's fighting words

ON TARGET

Alexander Padilla

FOR DIE HARD MUMBO—At least while Manny Pacquiao was dogging it out with Mexico's Erik Morales—the country became united as Filipinos cheered for their compatriot.

Members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and remnants Rev. People's Army (NPA) stopped their ambuscades of military patrols to watch Pacquiao from Baguio to Jolo.

Government troops moved to their barracks to watch the fight. The opposition and administration politicians who didn't go to Las Vegas because of their political rivals were glued to the TV set.

In many parts of the country, young and old, the unemployed farm boys and office workers, customers and storeowners, domestic helpers and their employers huddled together to punch the air, grunt and bang one another in Pacquiao corned. Kids on his Mexican opponent for the duration of the fight.

We were a picture of one nation, one people. At least for that one brief moment of victory.

Pacquiao expressed the ideal—and, next when he said, in answer to a TV reporter's question on what he says to his supporters: "Now we all should love as we enjoy being one."

(I hope we'll all finally end our differences.)

* * *

The Philippines hasn't moved forward while its once-poor neighbors have become Filipinos are dreaming.

Students fight Christmas, Tagalogs look down upon the Visayans, Visayans laugh at the Bicolanos, Ilocanos laugh at Bicolanos and Cebuanos have no patience to other Mindanaoans, Catholics are against Protestants, and so on and so forth.

In the US, cities like New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, America's cosmopolitan epicenters thrive on ethnic. The Chinatowns have their Christmas lights, Koreatowns their Buddhist temples, Japantowns their sushi restaurants, Vietnamese in the Germantowns...

But there is no Philippinetown. Why? Because Filipinos are trying to segregate one another. Pinoys have formed themselves into Kamalayang Bicolen, Cebu association, Ilocano-pangan group, Hocano group, each comes of sub-groups. These sub-groups were formed by Pinoys who lost in the elections of officers in their mother groups. If the votes we allowed in the Pinoy-to fight and victory could be translated into the economic and political spheres, there's no reason we would move up.

* * *

THE ENCHANTED to Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor that Malacañang would fight fair and clean and their civilian sympathizers "low-ratchet" has elicited strong reactions from quarters.

Some administration politicians joined their counterparts in the opposition in criticizing Defensor's fighting words.

But what would you have the civilized treeline say, that his boss would give up Malacañang without a fight? That she would cease to live while the rebels and their cohorts are knocking at the Palace gates?

Look what happened to Marcos and Erap. They forfeited their right to the highest post of the land by giving up without a fight. But they are of a different mold than Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Never underestimate the capacity of a woman—and any other women for that matter—to fight back when she is cornered.

MetroBriefs

Webb family to put up website on Hubert

THE MEDIA of Rafael Webb, one of the accused in the highly publicized Ecocrete murders, plan to put up a web site showing evidence pro-implicit innocence. "We consider people to know that the only recourse is to prove people believe that I am guilty," Webb, who is convicted of the slain Rafael Webb in Bacolod City, told the media. The Court of Appeals last month upheld the conviction on double-murder of Webb and his wife Ellen Tordesillas and set aside that decision out of the country of the brutal the victims—Geraldine Wenceslao, her mother, Estrellita, and younger sister, Jennifer, were killed inside their home in El Victoria, Pampanga. But he said he was not satisfied about the decision. "Definitely, I know that I will be free, whether I am released or dead by that time, it doesn't matter as long as I know I am guilty. I'm out of here eventually. That's what human rights is all about," he told the media. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Time to bury the hatchet – for now

ILLUSTRATION STANDARD

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the Makati City government have agreed to work together—for the time being. The two agencies, which have been at odds over the management of traffic in the financial district, unilaterally took on the opening of the President Diosdado Macapagal Highway. "We decided to have a joint project because we can see that [currently, we have] the same problem," said MMDA General Manager Bayani Fernando. "We have already arrived at the agreement that their plan would complement the city's construction, particularly the plans they already use," said Makati's Dasal board of two councilor Jejomar Binay. Binay's governing is the earlier agreement the business team that the MMDA has been working during the past few city officials said the built-less-traveled road is best known to motorists as a major highway to the country's financial center. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

Greenhills suspends 2 stall owners

THE MANAGEMENT of the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan has slapped some month suspension on the owners of two shops where four Samsung appliances found fake counterfeit cell units. "We have decided to suspend the operations of the two stalls for maybe a month or more longer," center general manager Jose Sonora told the media. If the management issues the order from the Greenhills Mall 1-A of the Center Mall and 11 B of the Annex Center Mall should be forced to be closed by now. The action taken by the shopping center's management came more than a week after Samsung and Anton Electronics sent cease-and-desist letters to the two stall owners. Sonora said that the last week found that company-issued CDs (compact and/or stolen to opposite incidents, in the stalls owned by Antonio de Ramos and Eddie Sung. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

SPORTS

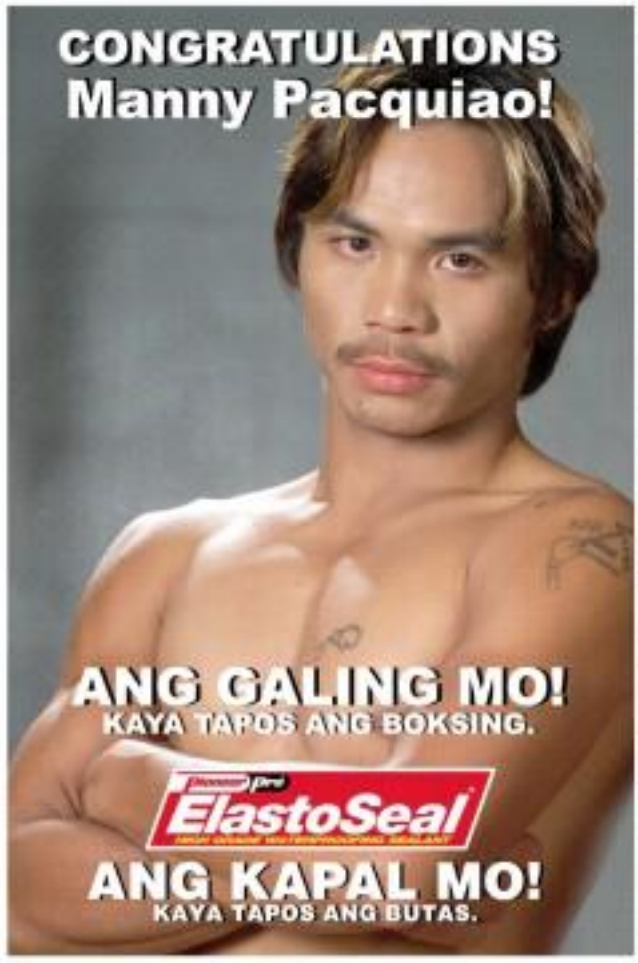
Hot Bryant

81

Total vs Raptors 2nd in NBA all-time list

LOS ANGELES—KOBE BRYANT scored a stunning 81 points—the second most in National Basketball Association history—in the Los Angeles Lakers' 122-104 victory over Toronto on Sunday.

Only Wilt Chamberlain's 100 points for Philadelphia against New York on March 2, 1962, ranks higher. The 27-year-old Bryant, whose previous personal scoring best was 62 points against Dal-



Hingis flashes old form, gains Aussie Open quarterfinals

HENGIS: Still savvy

Seattle in Super Bowl

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez

JAH overhauled Manny Pacquiao-assisted revenge over Erik Morales on Monday. AFP/FILE

Jaca to fight in March underneath B. Pacquiao-Hernandez rematch

Edwin L. Lagumbay

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—FILIPINO super featherweight champion Antonio Jaca will be saying action against the United States this March.

The Sikolan, Negros Oriental fighter, a former OMEF super bantam champion, will be seeing action in the first week of March undercard the Bobby Pacquiao-Carlos Hernandez rematch.

Jaca's stock rose following his first round stoppage of Mexican journeyman Geronimo Hernandez in the undercard of the Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales rematch last Saturday at Las Vegas.

Jaca and his manager Boy Velasco" inked an coming bout along with Pacquiao and his entourage on Jan. 27.

"I want Jaca to get the most experience with Manny (Pacquiao), because he sacrificed a lot for this win," said Inday yesterday.

Jaca (Sanchez) his manager for giving him a chance to fly home with Manny, adding its already return his family.

"It's better that I come home first and then return to the US later to train," Jaca said in Cebuano.

New weapons key to victory

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—THE LEFT STRAIGHT that's been remodeled into a vicious hook, a bigger and busier right hand, approval, new defensive moves anchored on ducking, head movement, side-to-side slips.

These didn't form the complete pack-age but they were the core of the weapon that Pacquiao had kept aware in the runup to his second duel with Erik Morales.

Pacquiao did just have to detail them, the re-sourceful arsenal was honed in full during his mental conquest and demolition of Morales.

But the 30" boxing superstars both fists swollen, did not hesitate to confirm that his offense against Morales on Saturday night was centered on the body.

"Marami kaming ginawa, pero ang pinaka-importante 'yung body shots. I'Pro-vid a lot of new moves, but the main thrust was to soften the body," Pacquiao said inside his MGM Room suite at the Wynn Hotel where a thanksgiving Mass was celebrated by Fr. Gerry Boyd from New York yesterday morning.

"Sa first duty—left straight lang ang lesser ito. Mayroon left hook, right hook, upper at body-shots. Ito-ang kanyang-inside [I used to rely mainly on my left straight but now I have a left hook, right hook, upper and body shots. Those punches from him]," Pacquiao added.

Trainer Freddie Roach said they had to train behind closed doors as other people would not be talking of the changes in the Pacquiao armory and arsenal.

"What we did was take the jab away from him," Roach told the boxers.

But although he had confirmed the technical changes, Roach would not openly admit the transformation of Pacquiao from a predictable, one-track slugger into a well-rounded fighter.

In that big fight against Morales on Saturday, there had been mixed fears Pacquiao could be lured into a risky tactical box-off.

However, whenever he would be caught on a flurry exchange, Pacquiao would report himself by outpunching Morales.

In short, that was practically a new Manny Pacquiao he touched base inside the ring at Saturday.

While he admitted Pacquiao has indeed undergone a style and operation overhaul, Roach has been circulating Pacquiao will always be Pacquiao.

Obviously, Roach is again trying to hide something about the former property in his renowned Wild Card boxers.

Meanwhile, the chances of the Wild Card gym have again been opened to the public.

There's nothing to hide at the moment.

His mission accomplished, Pacquiao is scheduled to leave this gambling capital next with Jinkee and members of his home on Jan. 31. They are expected in Manila Jan. 27.

BALDNESS?
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MAKATI
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CEBU

Docs say Morales is okay

LAS VEGAS—AFTER the terrible beating he received from Filipino superstar Manny Pacquiao, Mexico's Erik Morales was cleared by doctors at the Valley Medical Hospital here of any head injuries he might have suffered following his 12th-round technical knockout loss last Saturday at the Thomas and Mack Center.

Speaking to reporters from his home in San Diego, California, where he immediately entrusted following the worst defeat of his career, Morales said he had undergone a series of head scans but was subsequently cleared by physicians.

He added he would spend enough time to rest before making any announcement on his future plans.

Morales had already confirmed with his promoter Bob Arum and manager Fernando Beltran and was aware of their following to volunteer doctor-checks.

"Time will tell if and when I need to hang up my gloves," Morales told Bert Lotto.

Morales accompanied by his wife Andrea Mora, who is expecting their first child next month, offered food to members of his team in their San Diego home following their return from Las Vegas. Robert C. Lagumbay, contributor

FORD RANGER
Best Pick-up of the Year

Southern Ladies golf slated Feb. 2-4 at Del Monte

VILLARDAMAS: Favorite

VETERAN INTERNATIONALISTS Anyo Timpinco, Lota Roberto and Carmelene Villaruman, joing the Crystal Sugarol and a host of others lead the draw for top honors in the 43rd Southern Ladies Open which tees off Feb. 2 at the Del Monte Golf Club in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Although three of the country's top amateurs are not coming active in this year's staging of the annual event, the competing field remains tough with a three-pronged title fight looming in the centerpiece Championship flight among South-rounds lass Timpinco, Roberto and Villaruman.

Inspired, playing out of St. Francis of Assisi College, is expected to carry the cudgels for the youth brigade in the three-day event organized and conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) and sponsored by Rebisco Corp., Del Monte Philippines Express/MAWS Express, Dipsic Corp. and Hans Bedrosian Int'l Insurance.

Last year's champion Jayne Ignacio, 19-A-mate Frances Dowdell and newly crowned RP Ladies Open 8-time defense de Villa have bagged off for their participation for various reasons, leaving the battle for the crown with open among the other main-stayers of the annual event.

Aside from Manila Southwoods, other clubs competing are Alabang, Riviera, Sta. Elena, Orchard, Valley, Pueblo de Oro, Villamor, Lanang, Tuscany Bay and Del Monte.

Registration is ongoing. For details, contact NGAP at 525-6997 or 526-3136 or email at ngap@hkbbs.net.com, ngap@pldtdsl.net.com, and the Del Monte Golf Club at mobile 0908-855-5950/0-810.

Also up for the event, headed by hole-in-one sponsor Manny Ignacio Corp., Philippine Sports Commission, PFC Fellow Bijan and Rep. Constantino Jaraula of Cagayan de Oro are the classification tournaments covering competitors to entries division with fabulous prizes at stake, according to NGAP.

The other categories on tap are classes A, B, Canal Grand the seniors for players 55 years old and above.

Free practice round is set on Feb. 1.

UAAP verdict on La Salle case ready by February

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE COMMITTEE TASKED TO PROBE THE La Salle eligibility scandal is expected to submit its complete findings next month.

The UAAP board will convene tomorrow although league officials remain mum on the controversial case involving Authers Mark Borkhis and Ryan Gachalian.

The five-man panel have reportedly been scrutinizing key personalities from La Salle and the Department of Education (DepEd) to shed light on the saga unveiled.

Suspensions from the league is among the possible sanctions La Salle could face. In 1994, Adamson was suspended for a year after investigators showed that the Falcons fielded Marlou Aquino despite academic deficiencies.

La Salle revealed on October last year that Borkhis and Gachalian submitted spurious documents to gain eligibility to college.

After verifying its school records from DepEd, La Salle submitted to the UAAP board the results of its internal investigation, which tagged students assistant team manager Monty Salgado and secretarial clerk/cashier Rod Lacson as the team officials who helped secure the players' spurious documents. Both denied the accusations.

Those the league forward the case to investigating committee, headed by Fr. Rodito de Jesus of the University of Santo Tomas.

Other members of the investigating body include dean de jesus of the Eastern University, Fr. Rolando Medina of host Adamson, Arlene Boyles of National University and legal counsel Jaime Ryan Alba.

Borkhis and Gachalian helped the team in the lucrative 2004 championship run. Borkhis won in La Salle's season-opener against in the 2005 season, while Gachalian got out from the team last year.

Xavier Charity Bowl set

THE 2ND XAVIER CHARITY BOWL ROLLS IN HILO on Friday at the Francis Bowling Center along Ortigas Avenue. The event is spearheaded by the Xavier School Varsity bowling team, in cooperation with Xavier School Parents-Teachers Association and Xavier Alumni Association (Xaumni) and the High School Student Council (HSSC) with the proceeds to go to The Xavier School Education Trust Fund, which provides financial assistance to deserving scholars in order to continue their education at Xavier School.

NSAs need to liquidate ₱86 million

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE NATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS STILL HAVE TO LIQUIDATE a total of ₱86 million they received from the Philippine Sports Commission for their Southeast Asian Games holdup last year.

Speaking on the occasion of the PSC's 30th anniversary chat Butch Ramirez said the NSAs must submit an accounting of the money they received mostly for training expenses in preparation for the biennial meet.

The PSC chief admitted that the agency is feeling the crunch with the biennial approving only a P2b million budget for the year, way below its P307 million request and the P350 million requirement for the conduct of the SEAG.

To date, some 47 NSAs have yet to close their accounts with the PSC.

"These NSAs never work like private corporations with their own set of officers and sources of revenues," said Ramirez during a radio interview.

Ramirez, however, didn't complain about the dashed budget, but said the agency will be left with basic mandate from their mines terms.

"We will have to provide the national athletes with free meals, accommodations, uniforms and allowances," said Ramirez.

The PSC is set to hold its annual meeting with the Philippine Olympic Committee on Friday to draft their plans for the 2006.

Topping the agenda is the country's campaign in the Doha Asian Games later this year.

WINNERS: Denmark's Jens Eriksen (left) and his doubles partner Lundgaard Hansen celebrate after winning against Malaysia's Chuang Tan Fook and Lee Wan Wah in the All England Badminton Championships men's doubles final in Birmingham, England. AFP

Routs mark baseball meet

BLAYERA, NUEVA ECIJA — RAM MARAT AND *Pelagos City* concluded their respective rivals last Sunday at the start of the 4th National All-High School baseball championship here.

The Makati battery, with Robert Solis and Julius Dacuyo teaming up with Jose Ignacio, blasted Manila Science Village High School, 22-2, over at Pelagos City clinched 10 Laurel High of Manila, 20-0.

In other matches, Marikina scored a 22-2 triumph over Kalinga; Camarines Norte overwhelmed Tagaugaban, 19-8, while Bulacan thumped Cagayan, 12-6, to jumpstart their bids in the 72-team competition.

Ironically, three-time defending champion Ilocos Sur struggled before taking a 9-8 win over Isabela.

Makati, runner-up the last two years, hopes to finally snatch the title away this time in the 15-team tournament which aims to spark the resurgence of the sport in the country.

"I hope that we can be an instrument in the re-birth of baseball and softball here in the country," said Gov. Tomas Joson of the host province. "This is a sport where the Filipinos can compete globally."

The Philippines won the gold medals in baseball and men's and women's softball during the recent 22nd Southeast Asian Games. Marc Anthony Reyes

Morales posts another sweep

RICHARD MORALES—SWIFT RACING TEAM driver Nenan Morales, tagged as the next big star of Philippine racing, swept both races in the Group 2 division recently in the Philippine National Touring Car Championship 2005.

Morales pulled away easily to secure his double victory in Rounds 7 and 8 of this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP).

He finished the 22-lap morning race in 20:22.957 or a lot 14 seconds ahead of second-up JP Cardeo of Jordeo Racing who registered a total time of 20:36.828.

With Morales ahead, attention shifted to the close battle between Miguel Campos Yahon Motion Race Base Team and sensational newcomer Ulysses Mandagding, a former drifters champion.

Yahon's experience worked wonders in the last two laps as he took third place, just 1.414 seconds ahead of Mandagding.

Previous Mandiola of Big Chill Racing Team finished fifth while Mercedes Francisco of Petron Heron-SBA and Rob Corpuz of Velocity Motors Race Base Courses Racing Team fell lower pack and seventh respectively.

Morales became even more unstoppable in the second race when he clocked 20:40.254 seconds.

Mandiola came in seven seconds behind for the runner-up finish while Lucas Mandagding and Corpuz rounded up the top five finishers.

Overall, Morales now holds a total of 175 points, 38 points ahead of arch rival Miguel Lacson. Behind them is Mandiola with 142.

Mendiola Francisco, the top lady driver in the country, is fourth with 82 points while Corpuz and Dominic Tan are tied in fifth with 64 points apiece.

Equally exciting was the "1st Race Beat Incident Attack Challenge" race where Nico Monteverde waited the Open division over Ely Campos and Pelle Perez.

JP CARDEO tries to keep his grip of the road while Ulysses Mandiola (red Explorer car) tries to keep pace in Round 8 of the Philippine National Touring Car Championship 2005 in Batangas

SPORTSWATCH

Red Horse-PCSO Drag Racing

THE COUNTRY'S SPEED DEMONS RETURNED TO ANOTHER SHOWDOWN AS the 2006 Red Horse-PCSO National Drag Racing Championship Series resumes with its third and penultimate leg on Jan. 29 at the SMC Drag Strip in Pampanga, Bahagian. Twenty-six Series of Group N (Motorcycle Racing) gave a thrilling night of action as the battle for supremacy in the Philippine Drag Racing Circuit (PDRC) continues with the Automobile Association of the Philippines (AAP). The 20-year old Bo Series set the main event at 12:00A seconds in the fastest leg and broke into the 11-second barrier when he registered the race record time of 11.293 seconds in his Quick 8 Race off with Walter Pascual Blanche Racing. Another highlight of the event is the battle between the Group N Modified Class. Pursing and the Monster Racing teams which dominated the previous legs, according to SMC Drag Racing Director Al Gallo. Race of Battle are the Electric Pro Static Series 13.98 seconds and faster), Sportsman Class (13 seconds to 14.000, Heat Street division (6 seconds and slower) and the Favorite Class for motorcycle cars 1985 and earlier. Contact SMC manager Ronnie Mejico or Nelson Cayabo at (632) 817-7201 to 09 or 816-7219 for details.

La Salle-Ateneo spikers post 2 wins

SEVEN MORE CHAMPION LA SALLE CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES FOR THREE IN THE men's and women's divisions of the National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) volleyball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. The 5th Game Point Series saw the Lady College of Manila, 25-1, 25-92, 25-6, and the Lady Patriots sweeped Philippine Maritime Institute, 25-13, 25-12, 25-13. Last week, the Patriots beat Philippine Maritime Institute, 25-14, 25-21, 25-21. Meanwhile, PMI bounced back by beating winless Cecilio Apostado College, 25-21, 25-20, 25-16 to drop College of Science and Technology, respectively, 25-21, 25-19, 25-17, 25-21, 25-15. In the other women's division games last week, St. Francis of Assisi College won over GSC, 25-16, 25-18, 25-16, while PATTS College of Aeronautics trounced Mapua College, 25-10, 25-25, 25-23, 25-15, and National College of Business and Arts outlasted CCSA, 25-10, 25-15, 25-13. In the double-A side, PMI bested PBMA, 25-9, 25-13, 25-22, and Ateneo College edged GSM, 25-9, 14-25, 25-20, 17-25, 15-12.

GCAP hosts 1-cocker tomorrow

ONE MAUDAUN DOUBLE-HEADER SHOW TOMORROW AT THE SEN-Senior Center Association of the Philippines (SCAP) 1-cock derby tomorrow Jan. 26 at the San Juan Coliseum. The event will be sponsored by Sagupaan Center (since 1990). The homegrown, sabong derby organized by the NGA-Makati Championship Derby last month, will feature an impressive boxcard of 30 cocks. Among the derby hot favorites are Ronnie Mendoza, Rodolfo Cruz, Jason Campbell and Oliver Dizon. "Casabigan attendance can again expect a tough battle between local and external breed cockers," said GCAP chairman Patricio Antonio. Last week, the derby of Wenceslao Trinidad, Nueva Ecija, Ramon Magsaysay and Diego Silang, Isabela, Pangasinan, Bicol derby, Bulacan, and Quezon City Sunday Derby were crowned champions. For inquiries, contact 531-7300 and 526-5000.

RACING TIPS
BY TIBF CHOICES

A reformatted Pacquiao won

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY?

You must have heard everything that needed to be heard about how our Manny Pacquiao defeated Erik Morales.

But for reasons this month, I say so. Pacquiao didn't look impressive to me, which actually is the more unforgiving opponent like a ghost town while the fight was on, Pacquiao deserved the supposedly unfavorable Morales, period.

Remember when Morales said before the fight?

"Pacquiao never beat me the first time we fought," bragged Morales, who beat Pacquiao by a unanimous decision on March 19, 2005.

After their brawl last Sunday, Morales must have regretted having said that.

But that's going ahead of the story.

In their first encounter, Pacquiao fought with practically one good eye in the last seven rounds. The culprit was a Morales head butt in the fifth, which opened a deep wound on the right eyebrow of Pacquiao. Blood spurted from the eye from the fifth onwards, impairing Pacquiao's vision—and focus—the rest of the way. Credit to Pacquiao's courage and heroics that he was able to go the distance. Although he lost by a unanimous decision, the scores were close.

On Jan. 22 Manila time), their second meeting was a complete reversal of the first.

Six months after their first fight, Morales actually deserves to be known I believe, a totally different Pacquiao.

That Pacquiao, an incredibly reinvigorated, repackaged and reconditioned Pacquiao was all over Morales like an endless swarm of bees, stinging him with piercing body shots and jarring shots to the face.

In short, this morning, Morales had mostly met his match.

Pacquiao, who was made of granite in the fight that earned him $2 million as against the $3 million of Morales.

But no, although Morales had been so-thoroughly demolished to suffer only his fourth defeat in 46 bouts with wins—34 by KOs—retirement is, should be, hardest from the Mexicans mind. A third fight will be a sure blockbuster since it will decide who's really who between the two of them. A third fight will be a sure blockbuster as far the struggle fights that can decide the Hall of Fame. More importantly, it will most likely be for the struggle fights that can decide the undisputed champion among them.

With Pacquiao's slowing down one second, Pacquiao producing $5 million—maybe more—to Erik third fight isn't far-fetched. Morales will be lucky to pocket $3 million. If Pacquiao is meant to the ring, he's your monster of a.

In parting, I did say here before Sunday's fight that Pacquiao could win in rematch or less. I was wrong. Predicting really is so difficult a business on picking the winning numbers in the lotto.

But I did say here, too, that if a Pacquiao punch would connect, Morales would fall.

Next time, your house

* * *

EASTBOUND. The sensation of Loretta B. Sanchez, the wife of the late comedy of my departed brother, will be back to war tomorrow Jan. 25) at the Manila Memorial Park in Marikina after the 5-a.m. Mass at the Arlington along Aurora Ave., Q.C. She was the wife of Tito Cesar and mother of Jhay.

* * *

Comments or complaints?

Ritualo named player of the week

RITUALO: Wild in-Air21's this.

By Jane Navarro

PHILIPPINE HUNKS RITUALO SHAKES THOSE POINTERS WITH EASE on a regular day is nothing unusual.

But doing it consistently in a long quarterfinal series, where the stakes are high, is definitely out of the ordinary.

Ritualo showed just how dazzling his shooting touch can be in Air21's best-of-five quarterfinal conquest of Talk 'N Text that ushered his team in its first ever semifinal appearance in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Not to take away anything from the heroic deeds of Ronnell Tenorio, Larry Ouyle, Dennis Daniels, Peyton Arboleda, Randel De Ocampo and Yancy De Ocampo but Ritualo's outstanding plays on him apart from the rest.

At the leading scorer in the quarterfinals among all players, the former De La Salle University offseason was named the last Big Coffee PBA Press Corps Player of the Week.

"I always make sure to be in shape whenever I enter the court," said Ritualo, who jacked up his numbers from an average of 17.6 points in the eliminations round to 21 points per game in the quarterfinals.

Since entering the league in 2002, this is the only time the Best Line-around Individual had made it into the semifinals and, win or lose, will end up with its best finish in a regular conference with Bo Perasol as head coach.

The only-nine franchise still in search of a first PBA championship, Air21 might be well on its way in achieving it that in its history should the Express hurdle the Purefoods Chunkee Giants in their best-of-seven semifinal series.

With coach Ryan Gregorio drawing up the battle plan, the Citizen Kubrul Initio 1 Sunday night's bar was also quenching a score from the Express, who eventually lost, 94-89, only when fatigue solid on them in the final quarter. Ritualo exposed to No. 1 in scoring among locals with 18.5 points per game, now to the 19.1 ppg of Barangay Ginebra's Mon Caguioa.

GAB sets probe on Air21 plaint

GAMES AND AMUSEMENTS BOARD OFFICER Jun Villanueva said yesterday the board will not be compelled of the Air21 Express regarding the conduct of Purefoods Chunkee Giants Marquis Chandler during Game 1 of their semifinal series in the PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum Sunday night. Villanueva said that Air21 team manager Lito Alvarez was seeking the GAB on what possible sanctions it can impose on Chandler, who violently grappled Express player Gary David in the point of making the Air21 guard with 2:10 left in the third quarter. The commotion was triggered when David stole the ball away from Chandler with their legs being entangled.

PBF willing to do all for basketball

By Marang B. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL FEDERATION is willing to do anything to serve the best interest of the sport in the country.

Officers of the PBF gave this assurance to Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco after their meeting yesterday, according to POC spokesmen and PBF incorporator Jose Romasanta.

"It (the meeting) went well. There was no animosity in the group," said Romasanta. "Right now, the PBF knows that it is still the body recognized by the POC, but it is willing to do anything to serve the best interest of basketball (in the country)."

Cojuangco met with officials the PBA, PBL, UAAP National Collegiate Athletic Association and Basketball Association of the Philippines president Jerry Lim last week in line with a Memorandum of Agreement forged between the PBA and the POC regarding the formation of a new cage body.

"The (former) congressmen talked to all the stakeholders just to inform them of what is happening. It's better that they hear it straight from him," Romasanta said.

The PBF formed after the BAP was suspended and eventually expelled from the local Olympic movement, will cease to enjoy POC recognition once the new body is formed and approved by the FIBA.

Meanwhile, a high-ranking POC official wondered if Lim had come to that meeting last week ready to smoke the peace pipe.

The official, who requested that he not be identified, told the inquirer that he just can't figure out why Lim has not instructed the BAP to "withdraw the lawsuit it filed" several months back.

The BAP had sued the POC, seeking restraining order in a last-ditch effort to purge the sport's archenemy Manny Pangilinan. The court upheld BAP's case but the BAP never got to stage basketball in the SEA Games anyway.

Ateneo bets make move at Highlands

ATENEO MADE A BOLD MOVE TO OPPY LA Salle's sweep bid by surging ahead to the college and grade schools division in the first round Sunday of the ninth Samsung Interscholastic golf championships at the Tagaytay Highlands Golf and Country Club courses.

Raymund Escalona totaled a day-best 72 points, Don Padilla carded 40, and either of the duo of Dominic Tan and Kevin Lachica counted as the third score of Ateneo, which posted a 1-81 for an eight-point lead over La Salle's counterpart in college division play.

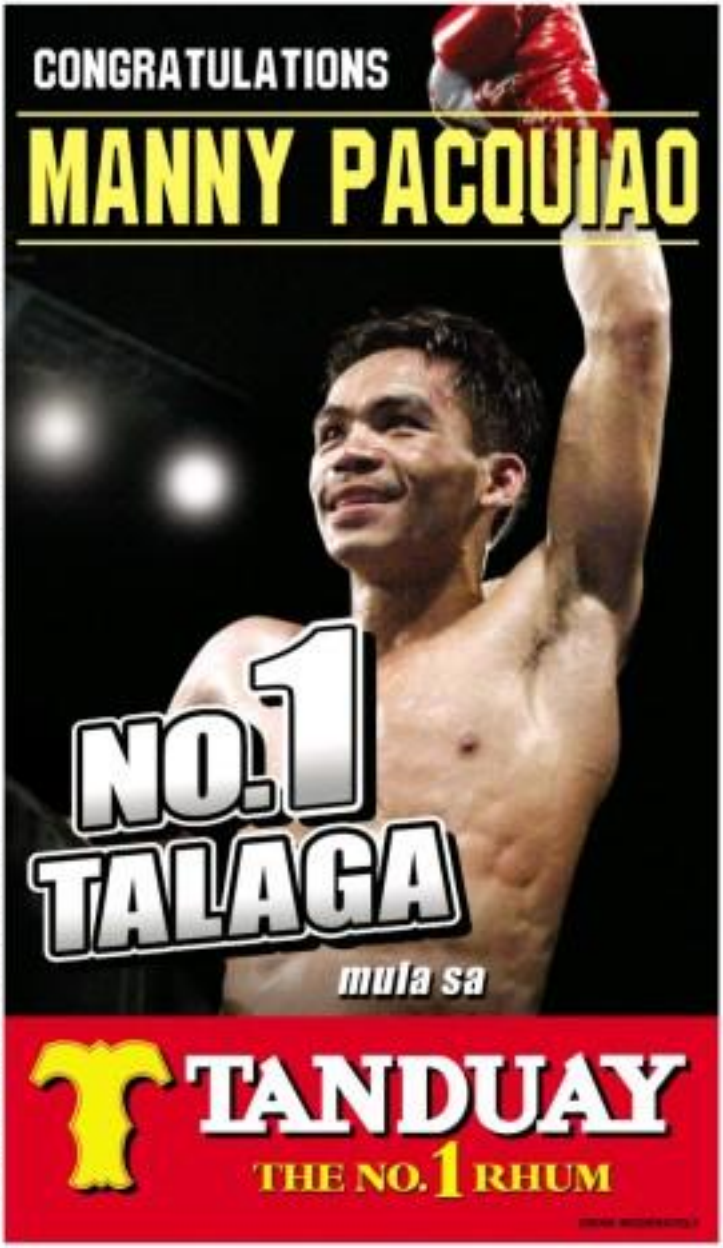
With Marcel Pepe firing 49, Ateneo also managed to hold ahead by two over La Salle in grade school action. Brix dela Paz tallied 46 and Rafael Reis Chio contributed 32 to boost the count of Ateneo (111) against La Salle.

In Subic, Ateneo managed to grab the lead in the girls college high school and boys high school categories of the tourney hosted by Samsung Electronics Philippines, Inc. and co-sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, 021, Marvel, Atmos, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Sunkist, Body Protect, G-Light Drink and Speed Plus.

Pamela Mecillas broke 1922 and Andie Lizares (37) opened up a six-point spread over Mateo's Celebrity in the girls grade school.

Mike Yee, last year's overall individual champion, and Marco Abaya combined for 95 points and Alec Cruz added 45 as La Salle-Greenhills rounded 228 to score ahead by eight over Old Montessori in boys high school.

Dolores Blanding was good for 46 points and Kim Hong had 44 for La Salle. Taft's 84 round that pushed them ahead by six over Merion and Ugong were thrown.



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TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2006 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

Lilia Raul O. Marasin
Assistant Editor Cornie S. Mariano

XTRA

Gov't posted ₱146.5-B budget deficit in '05

As Treasury made up for BIR, Customs shortfalls

By Michelle V. Rama

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET deficit stood at only ₱146.5 billion in 2005, better than most forecasts and much lower than the official ceiling of ₱180 billion set for the year, on account of higher revenues and tighter spending.

The deficit figure for 2005 or, fueled a 37.7-percent improvement from the ₱187.1 billion in 2004.

The Department of Finance said that with the improving fiscal situation, the government was hopeful that the Philippines would finally be granted credit rating upgrades by international rating agencies.

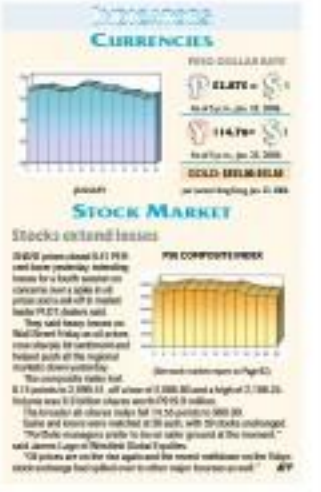
"We are hoping that this development would translate to lower favorable ratings, the way it has already manifested in positive response by the market (as reflected by tightening of spreads on Philippine bonds)," Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a briefing on the Philippines' 2005 fiscal performance yesterday.

Documents from the DOF showed that last year's deficit resulted from the ₱795.7 billion in revenues generated by major collection agencies and ₱942.2 billion in expenditures.

The actual revenue figure was higher than the target of ₱785.2 billion. The government was able to surpass its revenue-collection goal despite the failure of the bureau of internal revenue and of customs to meet their respective targets because of higher-than-programmed contribution by the Bureau of the Treasury.

The Treasury ended with collecting dividends for the national government from state-owned companies, recording ₱70.6 billion in revenues. The rest of

SEE P1-B4



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SC called on to break Malampaya impasse

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Bids for short-term T-bills rejected

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY yesterday rejected all bids for the 91- and 364-day bills, making a statement that the market cannot pressure the government to bear higher interest rates with its healthy cash position.

Had the Treasury accepted the bids for the 91-day bills, the rate could have jumped 22.4 basis points to 5.867 percent. With the rejection of bids, the rate for the three-month government securities remained at the previous week's 4.860 percent.

The yield of the 364-day bills could have risen by 13.6 basis points to 7.391 percent had the Treasury accepted the bids. The rate for the one-year bill was kept at 7.169 percent.

The Treasury, however, decided to partly accept bids for the 182-day paper. The partial rejection prevented an increase in the yield while allowing the government to raise ₱750 million from the auction.

The new rate for the six-month securities stood at 6.315 percent, or 8.2 basis point higher than the previous week's at 6.114 percent.

Tenders for the three issues totaled ₱6.56 billion, still higher than the government's debt-offering of only ₱4.5 billion. The amount of bids yesterday were, however, much lower than those raised in previous auctions where the government's debt offering was sometimes oversubscribed by more than three times.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the Treasury's auction committee decided to reject bids, fully for the 91- and 364-day bills and partly for the 182-day paper, not only because they would increase the government's borrowing cost but also because the interest rates sought by banks were higher than the rates in the secondary market.

"Besides, we (government) don't need the cash. We are in a position to raise our rates," Cruz said in a briefing after the auction.

Cruz noted that the government just recently raised ₱1.2 billion by floating dollar- and euro-denominated bonds in the international market.

Michelle V. Rama

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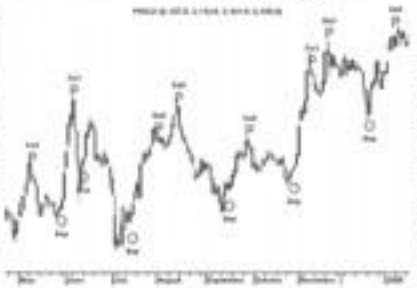

How to be a better investor II

IN JULY 2004, I WROTE A SERIES OF THREE articles designed to help you become a better investor and I feel that it is time to revise and upgrade them.

Previously, I called them The 10 Commandments, but nobody could find them on the Internet because some guy called Moses beat me to it. Apparently he climbed Mount Cyanide and brought down two tablets in relative, which instructed people how to live.

I took a cable car up Mount Manoc and brought down two capacities in Mayonnaise, which tell people how to invest. Among this Pittsburgh investment but Benjamin were and my Mercedes high.

Before I begin, I would like you to look at the chart in the screen covering much of 2005-6.

You will see that there are a number of cycles, each comprising a high and a low. These are irregular, both in duration and amplitude.

The SEV and DJIA groups inserted by the computer are a good set of a momentum indicator, similar to the degree of risk. These are security momentum indicators and the more big the curves, but after one year of intense experience, I adopted a UK version to the Philippine market.

Computers do not cheat, in it is clear that the indicator works very well and forms the basis of my investment.

Lag indicators, such as the 30-day moving average crossing the 200-day moving average, tell you when you should have done so.

Personally I do not find this very helpful as I use an adapted momentum indicator and Bond and Equity charts. These work independently and provide different information, which often com-

plement each other.

Deriving corresponding signals by completely different methods give me additional confirmation and, so far, my record has been pretty good.

The cycles apply also to individual stocks as well as the market.

This led me to recommend TEL at P326, up almost eight-fold, SLOBE at P400, FCOR at P1.80, PIR at P1.40 in 2002 and in SELL at just of P1.80 (the exact top), and PHE again, a few months ago at P1.20. (SELL at P1.50, which is the right time, was inspirational, and share oriented.

I also recommend ALI, AC and BPI, at much lower levels and in every case, I gave fundamental reasons to support my recommendations. Technical analysis plus fundamental analysis equals success.

All this by way of introduction, as I will now proceed to the first and most important rule.

1. NEVER TRADE AGAINST THE TREND

This rule, together with my logo, appears in all my business articles and my daily investment letter. It should be self-explanatory because if most foreign brokers are selling the market, or individual stocks aggressively, you will need to have more financial resources than they have combined.

As this is extremely unlikely do not attempt to challenge them. Wait until the downward momentum of the market subsides and there are large cross sales in heavies before you jump in. Large cross sales represent internal repositioning and often signals the end of the selling. It is pointless swimming against the current; the fastest we can make the current.

How do you know when you have reached the top or the bottom of the cycle? There is no infallible system, but there is an important difference between price and momentum.

The latter does not always follow the price but it reverses the rate of price change. This means that if the price is rising or falling at a slower pace, it could be signaling that the cycle is nearing a turning point.

A good clue is how the index closes, relative to the previous day's. If the index closes 20 points and recovers 5 points, this will not change the downward direction of the momentum.

But if the index drops 20 points at 10:30 am and closes down 5 points, then the momentum indicator will tell the computer almost immediately that the market downward trend is nearly always towards the close. Volumes of candlesticks will recognize this as a hammer, a reliable reversal signal.

It is quite possible that momentum will be unchanged or even slightly up, in which case

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

PSE Composite Index (PSEi)

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO THE DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF ZAMBOANGUITA (NEGROS ORIENTAL), INC.

1. Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 12 dated January 5, 2006 ordering the closure of the Rural Bank of Zamboanguita (Negros Oriental), Inc. (RBZI), the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) will start its operations for the servicing of claims for insured deposits in the closed RBZI on Wednesday, January 11, 2006.

2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of RBZI where they can file their claims with the PDIC representatives from January 11 to January 27, 2006, during office hours (8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.), Monday to Friday.

After the said date, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Claims Counter, 6th Floor, SSS Bldg., Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino St., Makati City from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. or by mail to:

The Manager
Claims Processing Department
Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
2330 Chino Roces Avenue
1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook, Certificate of Time Deposit, or Bank Statement including Unused Checks.
b. Two (2) latest identification cards/documents (IDs) with depositor's signature.

Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended by R.A. 9302, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Zamboanguita (Negros Oriental), Inc. is on January 7, 2009 after January 7, 2009, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

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Gov't ...

From page B1

most double, at P16.1 billion better than the target of only P16.6 billion.

The Treasury's own performance was more than enough to cover for the shortfalls of the BIR and the BOC.

The BIR collected only P436.5 billion, or P13.4 billion short of its target of P449.9 billion. The BOC netted in only P143.7 billion although it was asked to collect P151.2 billion.

The BIR and BOC collection figures did not include their non-cash tax and duty collections, which the two were lobbying to be added in their revenue performance.

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BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

NOTICE

PACIFIC SERVICES AND PACKAGING CONSORTIUM, INC. is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as New Domestic Enterprise engaging in Pre-Shipment Inspection and Export Packaging Products and to avail Non-Pioneer Status with incentives of P 100,000 per year under Executive Order No. 226 otherwise known as the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987.

Any person with valid objections on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, duly verified with supporting documents from the date of this publication.

Chief (RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Promotion and Registration Department

Pre-need firms emerge from sales downturn of past year

BSP, PDIC urged to split costs of UCPB debt deal

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE PRE-NEED INDUSTRY, still spooked by the financial woes of College Assurance Plan and Pacific Plans, is slowly rising out of a sales downturn, according to government data.

Latest figures from the Securities and Exchange Commission showed that pre-need sales continued to contract by 30.7 percent in November from a year ago.

But the decline was much slower than the 82.16 percent year-on-year drop in October.

Sales in the pre-need industry is measured in terms of collections made on plans sold, or as known in industry jargon as weight in.

January to November 2005 figures showed an improving trend compared to its performance in the first 10 months of the year, even as total sales still recorded a 34.72-percent drop against the first 11 months of the previous year.

This was slower than the 36.12 percent decline seen from January to October 2005.

Predominantly and Philam continue to lead, although both recorded major declines in their sales figures.

In November 2005, the output of top player Prudential decreased by 77 percent from a year ago while its year-to-date figures also contracted by 46 percent versus sales posted for the first ten months of the previous year.

The second biggest pre-need firm, Philam Plans, likewise registered a sales drop of 62 percent in November and a 69 percent contraction in year-to-date sales compared to a year ago.

Also, the pre-need unit of Sun Life Financial improved its overall industry ranking from fifth to third during the period.

In November 2005, Sun Life was the industry's top performer in terms of sales, growing by 663 percent versus the same period in 2004 despite the continuing drop in the total industry sales for the industry.

In terms of year-to-date figures, Sun Life likewise posted a major leap of 48.5 percent from the first eleven months of the previous year.

Mr. Bearbull

To see page B2

you know that you should jump in on the first sign of strength.

From experience, this usually means in the first hour of trading. Frequently, the market opens northwardly near morning and slowly eases as sweets its loss. That is the time to get into the market because the trend is about to reverse to the upside. The trend is changing for the better and you want to be investing with the upturn.

The momentum in these stocks may bring it up to the upgrade a top and my indicator is always one day ahead of the rest. This is because investors are educated as well as the rest, believing that it is only consolidating, so you have more time to get out of the market.

So you can see, the computer system are close to the top and investors are slightly behind. That is because I have used a momentum instead of my rule indicator, about which I will give no information, other than to say that it is more accurate. I will not answer any questions until the series is completed. (Write me, email: mrbearbull@hotmail.com)

BUSINESS

GMA 7 eyes 2 state-owned TV stations

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA NETWORK INC. IS STUDYING if it would make sense to bid for government television stations NBN-4 and IBC-13 which are both up for privatization this year, GMA 7 president Felipe Gozon said in an interview.

"We are not ruling out the possibility of joining the bidding for Channel 9 and 13, as you can't count on one," he said.

The sale of the assets of Radio Philippines Network 9 and Intercontinental Broadcasting Corp. 13 was estimated to yield a combined P4.3 billion.

However, analysts said the government might not be able to realize that amount from the sale of the two stations, saying their equipment were old and much of their airtime had been sold to blocktimers such as El Shaddai. A plus point for the two networks is that they operate on higher frequency bands, giving it a wider signal than other industry players.

GMA 7, now the country's most profitable broadcast network, said it might have its hands full with the new programming line-up for Channel 11, which was branded QTV (Quality TV), as well as its revenue-venture and local expansion. It is also expected to push through with its long-awaited initial public offering by the second quarter of the year. The plan is to sell 20 percent to 30 percent of the company's outstanding shares to the public to raise between P6 and P9 billion. Analysts participating in the bidding for the two government stations is still a possibility, he said.

Slower vehicle sales growth seen

Higher taxes, cap on input VAT credits and importation blamed

By Rosemil W. Domingo

LOCAL VEHICLE ASSEMBLERS ARE EXPECTing slower growth in industry sales this year due to the reformed value-added tax law that puts additional burden on companies through a cap on input VAT recoveries.

Elizabeth H. Lee, president of the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc., told the group had projected vehicle sales to reach 152,000 units by the end of 2006 or only 5 percent higher than the 97,665 units sold in 2005.

Lee said the new makers were expecting to sell 34,500 passenger cars and 67,500 commercial vehicles.

Last year, industry sales grew 13.3 percent from 86,163 units in 2004. The growth was mainly due to the advance purchases by consumers in anticipation of the price increases this year to be brought about by the reformed VAT that took effect on Nov. 1.

The 607 rate would go up by 2 percentage points starting next month. This is expected to further jack up prices and dampen demand.

Lee said Ganpi would have projected a higher sales growth rate if not for the reformed VAT law.

Lee also blamed for the slower sales growth forecast the continued importation of used vehicles, the current political turmoil that would affect consumer confidence and investor confidence in business climate stability, as well as the increase in corporate income tax by 3 percentage points to 35 percent under the new VAT law.

For her this month, Ganpi said overall sales were projected to slightly increase in January due to fleet accounts deliveries and the possible spillover of the advance purchases.

On the part of dealers, Lee said advance purchases led to dealers' hesitation in stocking up units.

She said dealers were wary of the "downmental effect of the 70 percent cap on the consumer input VAT credits."

"Both assemblers and dealers still have the difficult task of managing inventories," she said.

Ganpi has been pushing for the repeal of the cap on the VAT credit for companies which Lee said "poses a grave threat to the very existence of individual businesses."

The Ganpi president said the cap was a clear deterrent to the growth of the automotive sector and other industries as well as the economy in general.

No business cannot absorb the cost entailed by such a cap, an additional burden to the already suffering consumers is unwitting to created as prices of vehicles would have to be increased," Lee said.

"The 70-percent cap on input VAT is a discriminative and unnecessary prohibitive measure imposed on businesses. Country revenue is rent of doing business and prices of vehicles," Lee said. "This already changed the behaviors of dealers which in turn affects assemblers."

Further, Lee said another major challenge for the industry this year was the increasing smuggled cars in the market number would affect local fuel prices and affect consumer behavior.

Parliamentary shift: The real reason

Rolando C. Tinsay

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA unwittingly explained in a recent TV talk how the parliamentary system would solve all the problems of the country.

De Venecia said the parliamentary system would develop responsible and effective political parties. But Singapore is a one-party parliament. In the last elections, Lee Kuan Yew was terribly upset because the opposition doubled their seats—as one. In Thailand, there are no effective political parties. Bureaucratism is common. A law now prescribes that, if a member votes against his party on an important issue, he is not only out of his party but also out of parliament. A similar law exists in India.

A party is only as strong as its internal system of rewards and penalties. In the UK, you do not have to be a member of the district where you will run. There are districts which have voted for labor for the last hundred years. Any Blair could be wanted party leaders to run in those districts. Where they win, they are loyal to the Labor Party for life.

Dr. Venecia said a unicameral parliament would solve the gridlock in Lawmaking. The legislature will be dogged with hundreds of billions senate sidetrack, streets and sewers.

He said the parliament was the best way to fight poverty. He points to the rich nations in Europe and Southeast Asia, all being ruled under the parliamentary system. He does not mention that the poorest nations around the world, especially in Africa where citizens are dying of hunger every day, are also run under parliamentary systems.

He said that we could never vote in a parliamentary system, unless it were to get rid of a bad prime minister. If so, then it is just as easy to get rid of a good prime minister.

He recommends the French model where, he says, the president is the CEO, the prime minister is the COO and elected by parliament.

Charles de Gaulle went to meeting in his pants. Fifty years ago, he designed the French model, which was approved overwhelmingly by the French.

The president is the dominant figure in France. He is voted directly by the people. He appoints, repeat appoints, the prime minister who, in turn, recommends the members of the cabinet who need not be members of parliament.

Recently we saw how the French model worked. When, in a referendum, the French rejected the European Union constitution, the Prime Minister resigned. President Chirac appointed the replacement.

The parliament can oust the president out of office in a no-confidence vote. But, at the same time, the president can dissolve parliament by reason of the gave. The recalling elected by an abolished the government. For the past 50 years, no French president has lost his job by reason of a no-confidence vote.

By the way, the current French model is bicameral: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

Under the presidential system, budget stalking is a joint undertaking of the President, Congress and the Senate. But the President delivers the budget. Every time a Congressman wants to close his pant's board, he has to go the Department of Budget and Management, has to bend. This practice is what De Venecia wants to get rid of.

Parliament will prepare, approve and disburse the national budget. The entire budget will be everybody's pork barrel. The grossly unequitable opposition members will feed from the same trough. How can De Venecia claim that this arrangement will erase graft and corruption?

Money is the real reason for the proposed shift. There is no other.

3-mall complex worth ₱1B to rise in Ortigas

THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND the local franchisee of landlord chain McDonald's and SM Home Depot is spending P1 billion to put up a complex of malls at the Ortigas property near C-5 Road.

David Wharton, corporate planning head of MC Mall Inc., in a joint briefing described the project dubbed Silver City as a trimall niche-retail development located on a 4.5 hectare lot between Ortigas Avenue and Julia Burgos Street in Pasig City.

"We have secured a 10-year, lease development contract with the Ortigas group and we see us involving a pioneering concept focused in the consumer retail and service industry," Wharton said.

About 25 percent of the land is allocated to greenery and landscaping, while the three-level complex will have a covered parking space for 1,400 cars.

Wharton said the main offering of Silver City would be the Anniversal, a multi-brand one-stop shopping center for motor vehicles and related interests of the motoring public.

The other two malls called Fusion-tech Mall and Wellness Mall would focus on information technology and healthcare products and services, respectively.

"MC Mall-led by their George Yang (of McDonalds) renowned and Lancaster Chong...pioneered in bringing together various brands in one roof as well as providing a sort of permanent trade exhibition for consolidation and building needs through the local franchise of MC Home Depot," Wharton said.

"Ten years later, we are now applying the concept to the automotive market as well as IT and wellness," he added.

Wharton said Auto Mall, which would open by June, would be the first of its kind in the country with 80,000 brand new cars to be on display plus some of vehicle accessories, banks and finance service providers, insurance firms, sports and lifestyle boutique and events center.

He said MC Mall wanted to bring to all auto makers and dealers and that it was in talks with majority of these firms.

Fusion-tech Mall, which would open before yearend, would have an anchor 36,000-square-meter mall center that would be surrounded by technology oriented retailers.

Wellness Mall, expected to be operational by 2007, would provide wellness and lifestyle products and services including medical clinics, laboratories, pharmaceutical and beauty centers, children's playground, fitness gyms and spas. Rosemil W. Domingo

RAGUIO CITY, THE FAST TRACK TO CANADA IS COMING TO YOU

Canadian Professional Immigration Services, Inc.

SC called on to break Malampaya impasse

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SUPREME COURT WILL have to decide soon whether proceeds from the Malampaya Gas-to-Power Inc project should go to the national government or to the Palawan provincial government.

Foreign Secretary Raphael Lotilla said in a recent interview that the revenue share issue should be brought to the Supreme Court for a final decision as both the national government and the Palawan provincial government were set about to change their positions on the issue.

The national government argues that the Malampaya natural gas project is within the national territory, while the province of Palawan, claims that the gas field is within its boundaries.

In February last year, after a protracted dispute on who should get the proceeds from the Malampaya gas field, the national government and the Palawan provincial government agreed to split the net government share until June 30, 2018, or until the court makes its final decision.

Under the agreement, the 40-percent revenue share of the government in the Malampaya project will be divided equally between the national government and the province of Palawan.

The Palawan provincial government's share will be used to bankroll projects that will help preserve, monitor and protect marine areas in the province.

These include the North-South Highway, environment preservation and protection projects, and

electrification projects involving 400 barangays.

Part of the funds will also be used to put up facilities that will boost the economy of the exclusive economic zone as well as the ecological resources in the area.

The agreement also says that the P6.66-million financial assistance that the government already gave the province of Palawan in 2005 would ultimately form part of the province's share from the Malampaya proceeds.

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DRUGS don't always cure /C2

LIFESTYLE

Liza Cleta Basa-Formoso

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Scientific look at abdominal exercises

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Daza

IT IS SAFE TO SAY THERE IS such a thing as ab-exercise-exhaustion.

Motivated exercise videos and books are usually bestsellers. Fitness classes continue to be popular largely because of the emphasis on shaping and firming the abs and waist. Any class advertised as an "abs class" is sure to be well attended.

However, there are also ab-exercise misconceptions. Scientific studies have helped identify what is true and what is false. Here's what research has uncovered:

Upper and lower abs

The rectus abdominis is the straight muscle in the middle of your abdomen. It is the only abdominal muscle that can hypertrophy or become bigger. You guessed it, it's also known as the "six-pack" muscle.

Technically speaking, you cannot work the upper and lower rectus muscles independently. Research has found that when you do a crunch (lifting the upper body), you will "feel" the exercise more in the upper abdomen because more of the abdominal muscle fibers in that area. The muscle fibers in the lower abdomen are also working but not as much as in the upper region.

When you do a reverse curl (curling the hips), you will "feel" the effort more in the lower abdomen even though the muscle fibers in the upper abs are also working.

Obliques

If you stick your hands into your front jeans pockets, your hands are forming a "V" shape or the direction of the external oblique muscles. If you turn the pockets inside-out, your hands are now forming an upside-down "V" shape or the orientation of the internal oblique muscles.

The external obliques are located in front but the internal oblique wrap around the waist and attach to a diamond shaped connective tissue in the lower back region.

Many people think that the obliques are only worked if you do twists or abdominal exercises with rotation. But they also contract when you do crunches and reverse curls. When you do a reverse curl, the external obliques are more active.

The internal obliques are more involved when you do a crunch. When the internal obliques are strong, they support the middle of the torso like a tight corset. This is the scientific explanation for why crunches can help strengthen the lower back.

Spot reduction

Many people believe abdominal exercises (by themselves) will lessen the amount of fat they have in the abdomen. But "spot reduction" (or the belief that specific localized exercises will reduce the fat on top of the working muscles) has already been disproved so far back as 1971 when researchers showed that the dominant arm of tennis players had the same amount of fat as the non-dominant arm.

In a 1984 study at the University of Massachusetts, male participants did the equivalent of 5,000 sit-ups for 27 days. Fat was measured in the abdomen, buttocks and upper back. According to the spot reduction theory, fat should have been reduced only in the abdominal area because the buttocks and upper back were not actively involved in doing a sit-up.

Researchers found that fat was reduced in all three areas but only very slightly (or, as scientists like to say, "not significantly"). There was no real change in the thickness of abdominal subcutaneous fat (read: fat) or abdominal girth. Fat biopsies showed there was no significant change in the diameter of abdominal fat cells either.

Abdominal exercises can partly help you attain a flatter stomach and smaller waist by strengthening and firming up flabby muscles. To evaluate the contributing fat, you have to lose total body fat by doing aerobic exercise and resistance training, eating a sensible diet and living an active lifestyle.

To read a more in-depth article I have written on spot reduction, go to www.fitnessdirect.info/articles/articleID0003.html.

Visit www.fitnessdirect.info.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

THIS EXERCISE STRETCHES the front of the hips and thighs.

Equipment:
Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

1. Kneel down on hands and knees on an exercise mat.
2. Place your left foot beside your left hand. Move right knee backward until you feel a stretch in the front of the thigh.
3. Keep your hands on the floor and lift your chest.
4. Then put your hands on your thigh. Continue pulling your chest open and pushing your hips forward to increase the stretch.
5. Hold for 10-15 seconds.
6. Do other leg.

Performance tips:

1. Make sure to keep the knee of the leg in front in line with your ankle. Don't allow the knee to go past the toes.
2. Don't hold your breath as you hold the stretch.

Drugs do not always cure

BY DR. R. ZENDO ORDIETEZ

would with a pill for every ache, a prescription for every ailment...

While drugs are conceived of the modern age, curing many diseases, they may not be the answer to every illness.

Take the story of Ray O. Strand, MD. He with Lit had S-benzalydin or psychosomatic theorization. Early symptoms were fatigue, pain, and tenderness. Strand prescribed anti-inflammatories for the pain, tranquilizers for sleep, muscle relaxants, anti-histamines for allergies, and decongestants for the infections.

Every year his wife's health deteriorated. There one day Liz hunted about nutritional supplements and how they helped a friend's husband recover.

The doctor encouraged his wife to explore the possibility of taking the supplements as a new health practice. She took vitamins D and E, and beta carotene that had loads of antioxidants.

After three days, she felt better and, after three weeks on this nutritional diet, she decided to cut down on her medication. Three months later, she felt good as new.

Good and bad

Oxygen is necessary for life, but it can also be dangerous. This is the oxygen paradox.

Oxidative stress results in clearly observed damage to the cell by free radicals. The only way to fight it is through the intake of antioxidants.

It has been established through scientific research that oxidative stress is "the root cause of more than seven degenerative diseases" – diabetes, cancer, strokes, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's dementia, coronary artery disease.

Dr. Kenneth Cooper (father of the term aerobics), in his book "The Antioxidant Revolution," expounded on the importance of preventive medicine, his and other recent findings bombarded today's oxidative stress.

We are, as they say, moving from inside to fold, this is how it works.

There is a regular, day-to-day breakdown of oxygen in our body. During this process, a free radical is born that can cause a chain reaction. Whenever this reaction happens is exactly where cell breakdown will occur that will lead to disease.

Normal metabolism in the cell to create energy is oxidation through the natural process of using oxygen.

"Free radicals are oxygen molecules or atoms that have at least one unpaired electron in their outer orbit," if unchecked, they can cause havoc in our system. To the rescue—antioxidants.

Antioxidant army

An antioxidant is a substance with the capacity to give up an electron to a free radical to keep it balanced. The human body already has an army of antioxidants. However, our bodies do not produce all we need. The more is, the more damage, the more help we need.

The problem is aggravated by poor diet, stress and exposure to toxins like pesticides, chemicals, pollution, excessive exercise, cigarette smoke, UVA (ultraviolet A) and UVB (ultraviolet B) rays from the sun, excessive intake of drugs, thereafter spreads medication, radiation therapy.

Live till you die

Our bodies are our fourth estate. While we use them, we wear them down. To make sure they serve us well, ensure that they get the necessary care by:

- Eating a balanced diet, adding more greens and fruits
- Exercising moderately
- Getting enough sleep and relaxation
- Making prayer and meditation daily habits
- Taking your supplements of multi-vitamin and minerals plus vitamin C, 1000-3000 mg; vitamin A (beta-carotene, 10,000 iu); lycopene 1-3 mg; lutein/zeaxanthin 1-6 mg, alpha-carotene 500-600 mcg, vitamin E, 400-800 iu; bioflavonoids (green tea, grapeseed extract, bromelain, bromelain, alpha-lipoic acid, 15-30 mg; COQ10, 20-30 mg; vitamin-b complex, mineral complex; fish oil capsules or cod liver oil.

- Adding fiber, 30-50 mg (soluble and insoluble), daily

Tricia Rhodes, in her book "Taking Up Your Cross," shares this profound insight: "Always remember the brevity of life, the uncertainty of death and the length of eternity."

So, let's live until we die. But, until then, enjoy your body by making it work for you, your goals, your finances, your ultimate fulfillment.

Love and light!

Reference: "What Your Doctor Doesn't Know about Nutritional Medicine Maybe Killing You", by Ray Strand, M.D.

E-mail the author at coryquirino_fit@yahoo.com.

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ZENCO SALES, INC.

Redefining beauty basics

CHISSA GANCIA, ONE OF TODAY'S MOST celebrated faces, is the very image of beauty, youth, verve and health.

Proper skin care and a beauty regimen suited to her lifestyle and needs mean that she is able to maintain her natural good looks.

Biotics helps keep her skin blemish-free and flawless. The French brand draws from nature elements that revitalize, rejuvenate and invigorate the skin. It is founded on holistic methods in caring for the body and skin and goes beyond the surface.

Biotics is the first and only skin care line that uses the salivary extract of the Hevea Brasiliensis (rubber-tree) as main ingredient. Research reveals the extract contains the enzyme Hevein, reputedly the world's most powerful anticoagulant. The enzyme has been used in the medical field for decades.

Another enzyme, lipiti, has been found to be a very potent antioxidant, effectively fighting the process of human skin aging.

An international scientific committee composed of French, Russian and Spanish doctors investigated, prepared and validated the properties of Hevea Multiscale extract, during research and testing for 10 years. Biotics then integrated the enzyme into its products, formulating three different ranges...Hevi, Hevi and Hevi.

The Hevi range contains a regular concentration of the salivary extract and comes in the form of creams. Aside from the five creams, this range also contains other natural ingredients like organic olive oil, shea butter, marine collagen, elastin, grape seeds and cactus. The Hevi line consists of face care products that nourish and moisturize the skin aside from exercising blemishes and promoting skin radiance. The line also contains hand and foot care products.

BIOMICA enhances Chissa Gancia's natural beauty by keeping her skin flawless.

The versatility of long hair

HAIRSTYLIST PAISSY SORIANO likes women to wear their hair long.

Long hair, he says, lets a woman in her headscarves create various characters, minimizing the person as the occasion demands.

Soriano reports that in 2006 long hair will remain popular, though new styles might be introduced.

However, he says, instead of straight, flowing long hair, this year's look will be more about waves and curls that look sexy.

Soriano says it is not difficult for a woman to wiggle herself through a different hairstyle. With serums and follow-Hood & Goodness Conditioner endorser Anna Curtis, feminine transformation solves your every hair-raising problem.

The gorgeous Curtis is pretty pleased artistically tied in place with the use of her own hair instead of clips or bands. Soriano says the sporty look is perfect for a day of leisure.

He also assists a sweet and sexy look for Curtis, letting her hair tumble in shiny curls down her back with a few elegant strands around her face. Finished with a ruffled miniskirt and a chinese pastel top from Bem Mendo, Soriano says the look is perfect for work or school.

For special occasions, he creates a sophisticated look for Curtis with an up-sweep hairstyle with an intricate array of knots and curls on the top of her head. Glittery earrings from shappy Jacinto and a sheath dress prepare Curtis for an awards-night dinner or a work-related party.

Soriano stresses that hair should always be in good condition. The basics of hair grooming—shampooing and conditioning hair regularly—should be observed.

He says daily nourishing is a must, the conditioner applied as if the hair is being massaged from roots to tips.

No dandruff and frizz only. Soriano suggests a good anti-itch hair product like Head & Shoulders Total Conditioner. He says the product gives the same nourishment as regular conditioners but with the added benefit of up to 100-percent itch prevention.

To maintain a new hairstyle, Soriano also recommends a low oil treatment and a visit to a salon once a week if possible.

SWEET and easy

BIRTHDAY Prince, one of the twins, young guests Jordan Raymund Lim Joseph and Madelaine Manansig

GLAM Air wives, Noemie Tengtiero, Angel Bagasao, and one of the hosts, Robert Lim Joseph

TWO Victorian: Vicky Lopez Tuason and Vicky Fernandez Zobel

DAZE Barbers, vivaciously adorable Leah Navarro and Leonardo Argamino

A thousand people in high spirits

YOUNG Internet entrepreneur and owner of the hip boutique Gotham, extremely intelligent Antonia Tirona Martel

PRETTY Francesca with daughter-in-law Hazel Francisco of Philippine Tatler and granddaughter Isabel

SISTERS TWO: Jessica and Katrina Ramsay

KRISTAL Bagasing and Memphis Estrella

RARITY WINES AND SPIRITS and Philippine Wine Merchants, the country's foremost authorities on wines and liquors, held the awesome 5th Wine Tasting Festival that lined up on its billing as the Philippines' and Southeast Asia's grandest and biggest event. Connoisseurs, VIPs and neophytes turned nearly 500 wines from 16 different countries.

The ballroom of the popular New World Hotel's extension Hotel in Makati was jam-packed as 1,000 guests turned up to savor once again the best wines, which were matched with complementary cuisine prepared by executive Celdo Oreste Meatly, the hotel's executive chef, and his team.

Highlight of the event was the raffle of awesome prizes from partner companies. The award-winning Gulf Air, which, gave away tickets to its humongous grab.

Members from Rotary Ralph, Ronald and Raymond Joseph, co-owners of Philippine Wine Merchants and Ralph's, personally welcomed the guests and introduced them to the various wine wines.

Argentinean Ambassador Mirtha Schaff, Chilean Ambassador Jorge Montero, Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki and Romanian Ambassador Radu Hanumara, along with the Joseph brothers, gave the event a rolling with a continental feel.

Among the hundreds of wines, passengers were served wines from Montes, Errazuriz, Rodrigo Cuneo, Bella, Perez Pascuvels, Pedro Ximenez, Santa Carolina and Undurraga.

The sumptuous cuisine course included roast Peking duck with hoisin and cranberry sauce, Asian sliced ox pastry, Iberian dishes with Asian spices, and rosemary-spiked roast leg of lamb with mint and onion sauce.

Other sponsors, aside from Gulf Air, were Rustan's, Shoppe, Stores Specialists Inc., Mcdonalds, Calbee and Philippine Airlines, Bubbly.

Given the event's major success for the last five years, organizers plan to extend the festival to four awesome days and three nights. The Philippine Tourism Authority and the Department of Tourism have already expressed support of the event as part of their thrust to attract tourists and to get at all is really high spirits, Bubbly.

Gotham fashion

One tower's fashion dress and are dashed way to Mattress Plaza for the grand opening of young and extremely intelligent Marks' intimate Marbl Club to their boutique.

The intimate gushed over the luxe, cool interiors, including all the furniture designed by Antonio himself, passengers. That included the new leopard print sofas and the dark-wood console. The bright pink walls and Italian chandeliers added instant glamour, giving one the feeling of being inside a chi-chi Park Avenue boutique.

No sooner all treated to sociually and excellently prepared hors d'oeuvres by Le Souffle, no less, a sumptuous treasure through the interior and biggest clothing lines and accessories from the Big Apple, dubbings. Young and young at heart socialites, squealing in delight, stopped up the contemporary soul, chic autumn offerings. Like the designer-to-be Frankie B. Jones, Inga Persolaan Gerona cutie in more "forgiving" fit.

Cutie's Her Tatum's designed by the great Bob Mackie's daughter, Isabella, no less), Bonnie and Juliet's frenzy-to-succeed tandem, Goodwills undies, Body-punky Bongo, Mildred Bates dress and tiaras, and, incredibly, Annie and Tish's belts, their passing Melts The Rips, and tons of other exciting new trends, passengers.

Lucky birds were the attentive patrons stores: Manila Star Mayor Danny and Sunday Lacuesta, with daughters, socialite Honey Lacuesta, Mona Liza Arroyo, Kristin Ty, Cathlyn Nielson, Jessi and Noemie Tengtiero, Jean and Kristjen Lauretti JR and Gemma Lauretti, plus others like them too fashionable to mention, dubbings.

Sunday afternoon, Antonia's proud parents were there, Dom Antonio and mother-in- Rebel Martel as well as Philippine Tatler's Irene Marcel-Francisco and daughter Isabel, Rosette F Martel, on a rare late afternoon outing; HF and manager Bill Martel, Malka Martel, Juliet L. Tirona, Sunny and Cyder Clemente, with daughters Gladeas, Rebelle and Suzanne, Tina Tantoco and apparently busy Regis Aldeguer, Da Lalao Bacani, Lulu Tirona, Selina, Moss, Adolf and Julius Tirona.

Check out these super trendy, cool looks here, as well as more hip jeans and evening eyeing-up-big clothing lines.

They summer is just a week away, passengers.

AMBASSADOR Mario Schaff of Argentina, Ambassador Radu Hanumara of Romania, sons of the host Ralph Lim Joseph, Doris Jorduana, and New World Hotel's first couple, Carmina S. and husband Tetsuhon Sioco

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagens using Kodak Easy Share cameras

WIDE LOVERS: Joey Claw, Johnny Duran, gorgeous Dina Bonnevie and Billy Midani

MANUEL Fragano, Stefanie Lara Marie Arroyo, Michelle Tinio-Arre, and Bobby Mahoni

COUNCILOR Henry Lanzon, Don Antonio Nieva Jr., baby Lanzon and Belen Lanzon Tirona Martel

SMILEY Clemente, Pedrie Santos, Portia Santos, Lolei Clemente and Ina Tirona

WE ARE FAMILY Lulu R. Tirona, Portia Santos, Lizza Tirona and Troy Tirona

GOTHAM New Kate Santos, Clarice Clemente and Cinda Arenas

LEAD Science Behrens and Ariola Advisor

Science isn't only source of truth

I WAS A GUEST RECENTLY IN A TELEVision show on ABC hosted by Cris Delfino. The topic was "Astrology and Science" and by the other two guests were a geologist from the University of the Philippines and a well-known political astrologer.

The scientist said we should rely only on scientific knowledge in predicting what was to come, because it was proven and therefore highly reliable. Other sources of information not found on science could not be relied upon.

The astrologer on the other hand, said the positioning of planets and other heavenly configurations influenced events and the behavior of people, and could also be fairly reliable predictors of things to come.

I held a middle position. I saw no incompatibility in the various sources of knowledge because "truth is one, and various contradict itself." Whether information came from science, astrology or the devil himself, if it was true, it could not contradict other true information.

The scientist said India had many astrologers and homeopathists, but it was not as progressive in some western countries. She relied on science in making political and economic decisions.

"Why are we not ahead in rule on airplanes or spaceships?" he asked, "Because we know it is impossible to reach and survive without spaces to fly and had no oxygen."

He continued, "The problem with this country is that science is not given the importance it deserves. To make progress, we have to spend more on scientific research."

He pointed out that even sixth graders could not do simple addition and subtraction. "If we do not even have knowledge of the fundamentals of science, how can we build a really strong economy?" he asked.

I said I did not think there was any question about the need for a strong scientific education. I was all for scientific knowledge. One could not argue against the necessity of science in the development of things we know. We should have more science in the curriculum.

The problem was not often folks could die that science did not score the whole of truth. The scientific method was perfect. We could not improve on it.

To quote something unscientifically true, it should follow that scientific methodology is the only source of truth.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licaros

Incomplete

The problem I have with science or with the scientific method is not that it is wrong but that it is incomplete. It does not and cannot go beyond what can be measured, felt, weighed, smelled and tasted, or quantified in some way.

But there are other ways of looking at reality aside from the scientific paradigm. The big problem with writers of these other paradigms is that they have never been convincing or even persuasive in support of those other ways. There are thousands of them.

The scientist guest on that TV interview said he never heard of any. That's the problem, I said. I told him that, in the 1960s, Dr. J.B. Rhine of Duke University in North Carolina, United States, proved under strict laboratory-controlled conditions that psychic powers like telepathy and clairvoyance were really existent.

It was Dr. Rhine who coined the term "extra-sensory perception" (ESP) to refer to that ability that transcends the five senses, a kind of sixth sense. Through the work of Dr. Rhine and many detractors in the scientific community, no one ever proved that his conclusions were not valid.

More recently, in the "Dr. Dr. Russell Targ and Harold Puthoff at the Stanford Research Institute proved human consciousness could be projected to a specific location, unlock a person had never visited before, allowing him/her to describe it accurately. Both scientists have Ph.D.'s in physics.

At Princeton University's Anomalous Phenomena Department, Dr. Robert Jahn, who has a Ph.D. in Engineering, and psychologist Brenda Dunne validated, after seven years of experiments, finally the ability of the human mind to influence, through telekinesis, the fall of the dice in a random game.

Many other scientific studies in his field were done in Russia and other Eastern European countries. To say there is no scientific proof of psychic phenomena is to betray one's ignorance of this very important field of knowledge.

The next Basic ESP and Intuition Inc. enlightenment seminar will be held 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Feb. 4-5, to happen at the Ore Central Hotel. Mahmee Mahmee at 8917-7342/3.